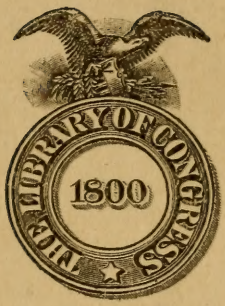
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CATHEDRAL, MEXICO.

YOUNG FOLKS'

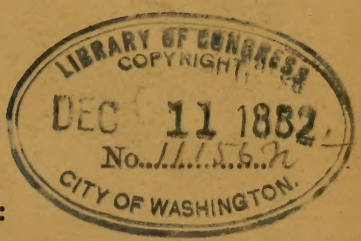
HISTORY OF MEXICO.

BY

FREDERICK A. OBER,

AUTHOR OF "CAMPS IN THE CARIBBEES," ETC.

FULLY ILLUSTRATED.



BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY ESTES AND LAURIAT,

301–305 WASHINGTON STREET.

1883.

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UNIVERSITY PRESS:
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

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HISTORY OF MEXICO.


UNITED STATES
NEW ORLEANS
EL PASO
GALVESTON
LAREDO
GULF OF MEXICO
MATAMORAS
TROPIC OF CANCER
PACIFIC OCEAN
LOWER CALIFORNIA
GULF OF CALIFORNIA
SONORA
GUAYMAS
CHIHUAHUA
HUHUA
COAHUILA
NUEVO LEON
TAMAULIPAS
SINALOA
DURANGO
ZACATECAS
SAN LUIS POTOSI
MAZATLAN
TAMPICO
PROGRESO
MERIDA
YUCATAN
CAMPECHE
FRONTERA
TABASCO
CHIAPAS
GUATEMALA
BELICE
VERA CRUZ
MEXICO
MANZANILLO
COLIMA
ACAPULCO
OAXACA
TEHUANTEPEC
GUERRERO
HIDALGO
MORELOS
PUEBLA
QUERETARO
GUANAXUATO
38°
34°
30°
26°
22°
18°
14°
10°
31°
27°
23°
19°
15°

MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION.

SOUTH of the United States, stretching away towards Central America, lies the country of Mexico. It has a large extent of territory, being fifteen hundred miles in length, and quite eight hundred miles in width in its broadest part. It has a coast line of nearly five thousand five hundred miles, and lies between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. Being so much farther to the south than the United States, its climate would naturally be much hotter, yet such is not the case all over Mexico. Though it extends into the tropics more than six degrees, yet the greater portion of its territory enjoys a temperate climate. This is due to the fact that it is a mountainous country. We know that in going up a high mountain the temperature gets lower, or colder, the higher we ascend. So it is that Mexico, though extending far down into the torrid zone, has the cool climate of the temperate zone, except along its coasts and in the far south.

We might say that the backbone of Mexico is a long mountain-ridge, with ribs of hills spreading away on either side to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, or that the mountain system of the Andes stretches along its entire length. In speaking of the Andes we naturally think of

South America and its ranges of volcanoes; but if we take a map and trace this vast system up through Central America, we shall see that it rises into great prominence in Mexico, and even in the United States, where it is known as the Rocky Mountains.

We shall see that it spreads itself into two great chains; one approaching the eastern and the other the western coast, and running northward parallel to them.

These are the Cordilleras — or chains — of the Andes. They enclose between them a vast plain, or plateau, not always level, but broken by hills and dotted with other mountains or volcanoes. This plateau, the Mexican table-land, is several hundred miles in length, and from one to three hundred miles in breadth. It is this table-land that possesses the temperate climate and produces the plants of our own zone, while the plains that lie between the bases of the mountains and the coast are hot, and have a tropical vegetation. To complete this broad sketch of Mexico, take your map again, and note the shape of the country. Does it not resemble a cornucopia, a horn of plenty? That is what it is, a veritable horn of plenty, with its hills and mountains containing great stores of silver, and its lowlands filled with forests of valuable woods. You will see that the throat of this horn of plenty is the most mountainous, and that great plains spread out in the north towards the United States, and a low, flat peninsula terminates its eastern portion — the peninsula of Yucatan. This much for a broad, general view of the physical features of the country whose history we purpose to read.

You will see that it is no small portion of this North American continent that we shall examine. It is a very important portion, lying, as it does, — as the great Humboldt has expressed it — in the highway of commerce between the two hemispheres.

It has other considerations, also, than those of a commercial character, to entitle it to our closest attention. The wisest of our learned men have looked upon this region as



MEXICAN CACTI.

the seat of American civilization, — that is, that here the wild Indian first forsook his habits of savagery and settled down to a peaceful life. Here he became civilized, in fact,

built cities and cultivated land, instead of always fighting and wandering about from country to country.

We shall come to those wonderful cities they built by and by, for their ruins fill the forests of the southern portion of Mexico and Yucatan.

It is difficult to choose whether to follow first the history of these most ancient of people, or to commence with those that have filled a more prominent place in more recent times.

Let us go up into that vast table-land and seek out the abiding-place of the nation that ruled Mexico when first this country was discovered by Europeans, by white men. We shall find ourselves in the valley of Mexico, enclosed on all sides by spurs of mountains from that mighty chain that strides the whole length of the continent. We shall find a valley sixty miles in length and thirty in breadth, surrounded by a mountain wall two hundred miles in circumference. We shall find it a delightful region of lakes and valleys and wooded hills, bathed in tropic sunshine, yet with the pure atmosphere of the temperate zone. For it is the centre of that region lying in the tropics, yet at an altitude so high as to remove it from tropic heat. In the distance you may see the glittering domes of two great snow-crowned volcanoes. The valley itself is over seven thousand feet above the sea, while the volcanoes are more than seventeen thousand!

If we could occupy some commanding position, we should not fail to note the numerous lakes that stretch along this beautiful valley and form a glistening chain its entire length. It is they that have given it its Indian name, *Anáhuac*,* or by the water side, since the earlier towns and cities were built near their margins, or upon the islands in them.

And when were these first cities built?

* "*Anahuac, quiere decir cerca del agua.*" — CLAVIGERO.

Rather, let us ask, when was this valley first populated? We are not the first who have asked this question; we are not the last who will ask it. Constantly, to the inquiring mind that searches into the history of our country, this question arises: "Whence came these people, and when?"

Even yet, with all the light shed by science, we go groping about in the dark, asking of ourselves and of one another: "When and whence?" The origin of the American people is enveloped in mystery; but our knowledge of that portion that resided in Mexico extends farther into the past than of any other, for they were more civilized when discovered than any others They had records extending back hundreds of years.

They had cities and white-walled temples and palaces, even so long ago as when Columbus sailed into this New World; yes, even when the Northmen coasted our northern shores, eight hundred years ago.

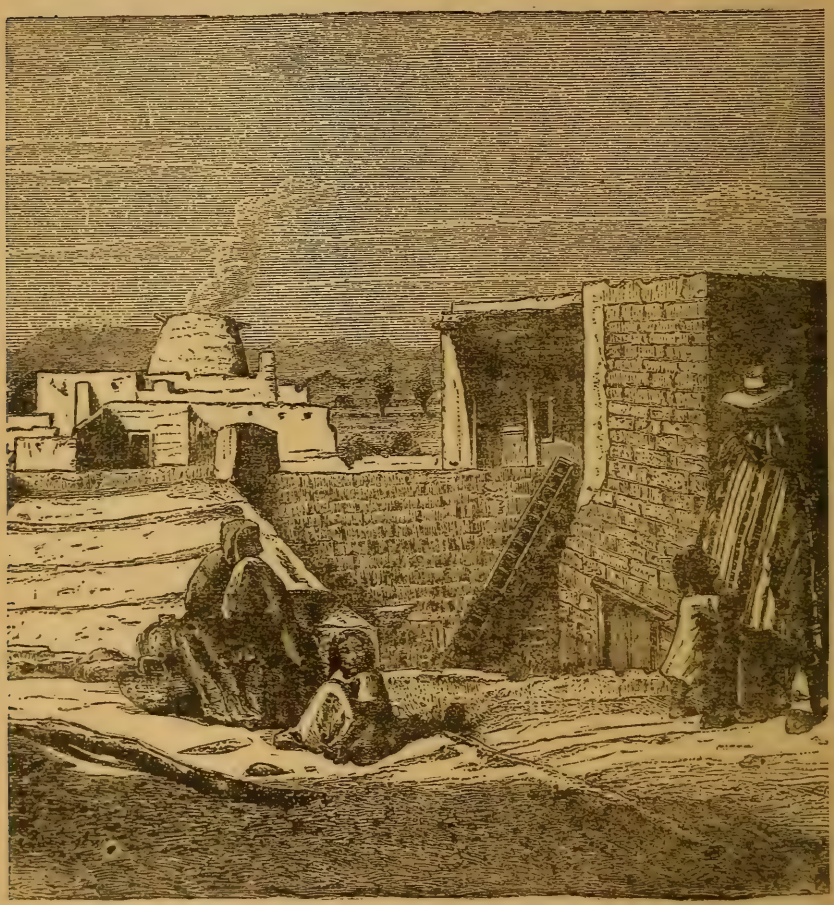
You may add yet another thousand years to those eight hundred, and yet not reach the period in which those cities were built and to which their records carry us.

Nobody knows whence came the first populators of Mexico. Some historians think that they came from a region in the north; others believe that they originated in the south; others say they came from the west, and yet others that they came from the east.

From the north might have come the Jews, the lost tribes of Israel, by the way of Behring's Straits to the northwest coast of America, and thence, gradually moving southward, have reached finally Mexico.

They might have come this way, and at that remote time the islands between Asia and America may have been nearer together, or the sea may have been frozen over and have given them a safe passage. They may have brought with them their flocks and herds, and also all those strange

birds and beasts that we find to-day peculiar to Mexico and South America. Those historians who believe this have found many things in support of their theory; they have found Jewish manners and customs among the Indian tribes



A PUEBLO.

in the north, and have even found some tribes speaking the dialect.

From the west may have appeared the Japanese, the Malays, or the Chinese. It would, indeed, seem easier for

these people, any or all of them, to cross to the western shore of our continent by sea than by land. There is a great "river in the sea" called the *Kuro Siwo*, or Black Stream, similar to our Gulf Stream, that crosses the Pacific Ocean from Japan to our northwest coast, and sweeps southward along the western shores. By means of this ocean river, with its steady current, Japanese junks have been drifted across the Pacific to the coast of California. One writer, who has given the subject great attention, says that a drifting wreck would be carried eastward by the *Kuro Siwo* at the rate of ten miles a day. Cast upon our coast, the Japanese sailors may have exerted some influence upon the civilization of the Indians already there, but they could not have come in this way in sufficient numbers to people the country.

The Malays were bold navigators, and may have visited the west coast, but it is a question if any of them stayed.

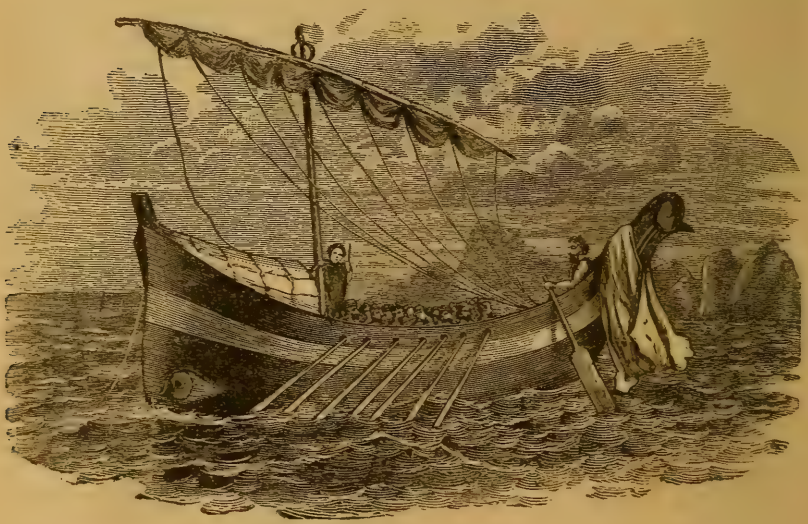
Looking east, how would it be possible for any people to cross the wide expanse of ocean that Columbus first crossed in modern times? It would seem difficult, yet it does not seem so to those who believe that from this direction America first received her people.

Did you ever hear the story of Atlantis?

Atlantis was a great island that is said to have existed in the Atlantic ocean ages and ages ago. According to some ancient historians it was fertile and beautiful, with extensive forests and rivers, hills, mountains, valleys — in short, a good-sized continent. It was peopled by an intelligent and warlike race, who even invaded the neighboring coast of Africa and perhaps passed into Spain. Some Phœnecian navigators claimed to have sailed beyond the Pillars of Hercules — the Strait of Gibraltar — and to have discovered it. It was claimed that this was more than an

island — that it was a continent — and was an extension of Central America away out into the Atlantic and over towards Africa. The peninsula of Yucatan is considered, by the people who hold this theory, as part of that continent which sank at some remote age of the world, and left the West India islands as mountains, sticking up above the sea to remind us of its former existence.

This continent, or great island, Atlantis, is said to have



PHŒNECIAN VESSEL.

had just such temples and palaces of stone as we find in Yucatan to-day lying in ruins in the wilderness. Did the Phœnecians visit this country by coasting the shores of Atlantis, or did part of the Atlantides themselves escape to Central America and there build the cities buried in the vast forest there now? It has not been proven that they did, any more than that the Jews came from the north, or the Malays and the Japanese from the west.

And what has been proven by all our study of the ruins and the records of this people?



PHŒNECIAN ARCHITECTURE.

Only this, that there has long existed in Central America — in which we would embrace Southern Mexico and Yucatan — an American civilization superior to any other on this continent at the time of its discovery.

There remains still one more theory to consider: Was it possible for this civilization to have been developed by the people placed here by the Creator?

Was it possible for the Creator to place men and women here originally, without making them pass over from the other continent?

It was possible, was it probable?

Some there are who think that this was done; who claim that our continent is oldest, according to its geological formation, and that it was as likely that people passed to the eastern hemisphere from the western as that they should have passed to the western from the eastern.

It is difficult for those who hold this theory to account in any other way for the many peculiarities in American architecture, for the totally different aspect of the natives of this country from every other. They hold that it would have been impossible for all the animals of this so-called New World to have originated from the Old World: the tapirs, boa-constrictors, pumas, etc., that seem to belong to the warmer parts of America alone, — that they would have frozen in coming down from the north by way of Behring's Straits, with the Jews, even if they had originally been created in Europe or Asia.

Many wise men have at last concluded that our great continent was originally settled by two different peoples. One was an *indigenous* race, — created here, belonging exclusively to this country; and the other came to North America from Asia by way of Behring's Straits, or the Aleutian islands. In support of this they call our attention to the great difference between the northern and the south-

ern Indians. The Indians of Mexico and Central America are totally different from those of the United States, Canada and Labrador, with the exception of the Mound Builders, the Cliff Dwellers and the Pueblo Indians, who belong to the south and have strayed away. They are so unlike, that only this difference of origin seems to explain the reason why it is so. While those Indians now living mainly south of the Mexican border have great similarity amongst themselves, and have no representatives in the Old World, those of the north seem to have a resemblance to some Indians in Eastern Asia. But these are all speculations, with more or less of proof in favor of the last theory.

We will go on to describe the Indians found in Mexico at the coming of the white men, and then the reader may judge whether these people had a foreign origin; or whether they commenced existence in southern Mexico and founded there a great empire, which will be mentioned in its proper place.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANCIENT MEXICANS.

[1000 B. C.] PERHAPS the principal reason why so many have sought to find a birthplace for this race in a foreign country is because their own traditions are so obscure. Yet great historians tell us that they are no more so than those of many nations of the Old World. They do not extend back so far, that is all. Their earliest traditions reach only to about one thousand years before the coming of Christ. And where the exact line of division occurs between *tradition* and *history* it is difficult to determine. But we may say pretty positively that their annals may be accepted as *history* so far back as the sixth century.

[SIXTH CENTURY, A. D.] Though the ancient history of Mexico commences with the annals of the Toltecs, it is believed the country was inhabited by a wild people before this race came into prominence. There were the Olmecs and Xicalancas, the Otomies and Tepanecs — we are speaking now of the Mexican valley. Then, also, if we may believe the traditions, there were giants in those days. But we may find that the history of every people begins with fables and traditions regarding giants, and a great flood that may have occurred before or after the arrival of the giants upon the earth. We shall see, later on, that all these different tribes living in Mexico preserved traditions of a flood, or deluge, that covered their portion of the world, and destroyed the inhabitants of their country. Now, these giants may have been fabled monsters, but the early Indians

believed that they lived here in Mexico. They were good-natured men, but very lazy, and when the strangers arrived among them from the south they enslaved them. Tired at last of the disgusting habits of the giants, the Indians turned upon them and slew them, first having put them to sleep by drugging their wine. Thus Mexico was freed from these worthless giants; but another monster was to stride over the land for many hundred years and make its fair valleys to be desolate more than once, this was the demon war.

THE TOLTECS.

[596–1050.] Our first certain knowledge is of the race known as the Toltecs, — *Toltecas*, artificers, or architects, — who were really quite civilized when they first appeared in the pages of history. They understood and practised agriculture and many arts. Being driven from a country in which they had been long settled, by invading savages, they commenced a journey southward, halting at intervals long enough to plant corn and cotton and gather the crops.

[596.] Their annals tell us that they began their migration in the year "1 Tecpatl," or 596 of our Christian era. The country they left, supposed to be in the north, they called *Huehue Tlapaltan*, or the old Tlapaltan.

Here again enters speculation, upon the location of that country of the Toltecs. No one knows certainly where it was, but everything points to its having been in the north.

If you are acquainted with the early history of the United States, you will remember that the oldest remains of civilization there are those of the Mound Builders. You will recall the descriptions given of the great *earthworks* lying in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys; works so vast that it must have taken many generations to complete them, and



MOUND BUILDERS.

erected so long ago that not even the faintest tradition remains to tell who built them.

They were a very civilized race, these Mound Builders, very different from the savages who surrounded them, or who have since swept over the country they once occupied.

They extended their sway, we know, as far north as Lake Superior, because old shafts have been discovered in the copper mines there, and detached masses of copper ore, with the wedges and chisels they used at their work. This was but an outpost of theirs, for their great works were in the south. Everything seemed to indicate, also, that they came from the south. Besides axes, adzes, lance-heads, knives, etc., found in these mounds, explorers have also unearthed pottery of elegant design, ornaments of silver, bone and mica, and of shell from the Gulf of Mexico. But there have been found there implements of *obsidian*, a volcanic product once used by the ancient Mexicans for spear-heads, arrow-heads, and knives. This shows that this people had connection with Mexico, if they had not originally come from there, since this volcanic glass, obsidian, "is found in its natural state nowhere nearer the Mississippi valley than the Mexican mountains of Cerro Gordo."

There are evidences, likewise, that they possessed the art of spinning and weaving, which was unknown to the Indians of the north, but practised years ago by those of the south — of the West Indies and Mexico. Now, it would seem that these great Mound Builders, when they were driven from this country, took a southerly direction, and at last arrived in Mexico. It is much pleasanter to think this than that they were crushed out of existence entirely; and there is a great deal to prove that this was actually the case, and that they were identical with those Toltecs who came down into Mexico twelve hundred and fifty years ago.

In doing this, in performing this migration southward, they were, it is said, only returning to their old homes, from which their ancestors had strayed, it may be, in the first years of the world's history.

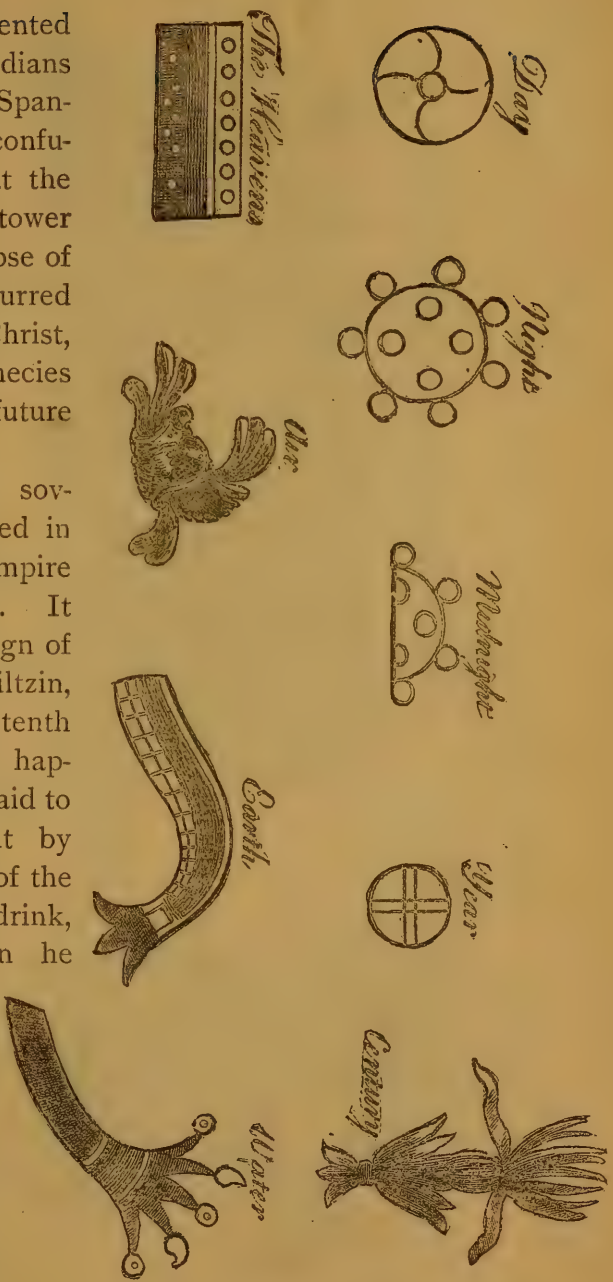
[700.] Well, the Toltecs came into Mexico; suddenly appearing from the darkness that had enveloped their past, and settled finally at Tollantzingo, in the year 700, where, twenty years later, they founded the city of Tollan, or Tula. It is said by some that Tula already existed, under the name of *Man-he-mi*, and was merely rebuilt and re-named by the Toltecs. Be this as it may, the ruins of this capital city of the Toltecs now remain on the northern edge of the Mexican valley, to point out to the visitor the site of an ancient empire. The writer of this history has seen them — a scattered line of earthen-walled houses and temples, occupying a ridge of hills overlooking a lovely valley. On the face of a cliff is sculptured one of their heroes, and in the market-place of the present town of Tula may be seen sculptured pillars and great stones, taken from the ancient city of Tollantzingo. The Toltec monarchy commenced in the year 607 of the Christian era, and lasted till about the year 1000, each monarch reigning fifty-two years; or if he died before this period was completed, his successor was not appointed until its completion.

They were more given to the arts of peace than those of war, and their civilization was, perhaps, of a higher grade than that of any Indian nation that has succeeded them. They invented, or reformed, that wonderful calendar system which was used by all the people of the valley, and which required great knowledge of astronomy in its construction. * In about the year 660 they assembled all their wise men, prophets and astrologers, and painted a famous book, which they called Teoamoxtli, or Divine Book. In this sacred

* Clavigero; year 812–820, acc. to Bancroft.

book was represented the origin of the Indians and (according to Spanish writers) the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel, the eclipse of the sun that occurred at the death of Christ, as well as prophecies concerning the future of the empire.

[1000.] Eight sovereigns had reigned in Tula before the empire began to weaken. It was during the reign of the emperor Topiltzin, some time in the tenth century, that this happened. And it is said to have come about by means of the love of the king for strong drink, and for a woman he had no right to love. The legend runs somewhat in this wise: One of the Toltec nobles (who had such a long name that it would be difficult for us even to



MEXICAN SYMBOLS.



pronounce it) had a lovely daughter called Xochitl. One day this noble succeeded in preparing a delicious kind of a drink — supposed to be the *pulque*, made from the maguey plant, and now so much drank in Mexico. Charmed with his success, he sent some as a present to his sovereign by the hand of the beautiful Xochitl — pronounced Hocheetl, and signifying the flower of Tollan. The emperor was so delighted with the *pulque* that he ordered a large supply, and he was so enamored of Xochitl that he kept her a prisoner in his palace for many years and would not let her return to her people. Things came to such a pass after a while that his subjects began to murmur and many rose in rebellion.



MEASURES OF TIME.

[A. D. 1050.] And so it happened that, what with civil wars, famine and pestilence, there was but little of the great Toltec empire left by the middle of the eleventh century, and it perished from the earth. The famished and plague-stricken people scattered over a wide expanse of territory to the southward, leaving their capital city because they thought it accursed of their gods. But it was only as a nation that the Toltecs disappeared, for many of them continued to live in the country, and exerted an important influence upon the tribes that afterward invaded the valley of Anahuac. It is with a feeling of deep regret that we see this cultured race swept into oblivion, and the land they occupied once more given over to savages.

RUINS IN ANAHUAC.

There are many ruined structures in the valley of Mexico that are attributed to the Toltecs, and were either built by them or by the people who preceded them, the Olmecs, or the Totonacs.

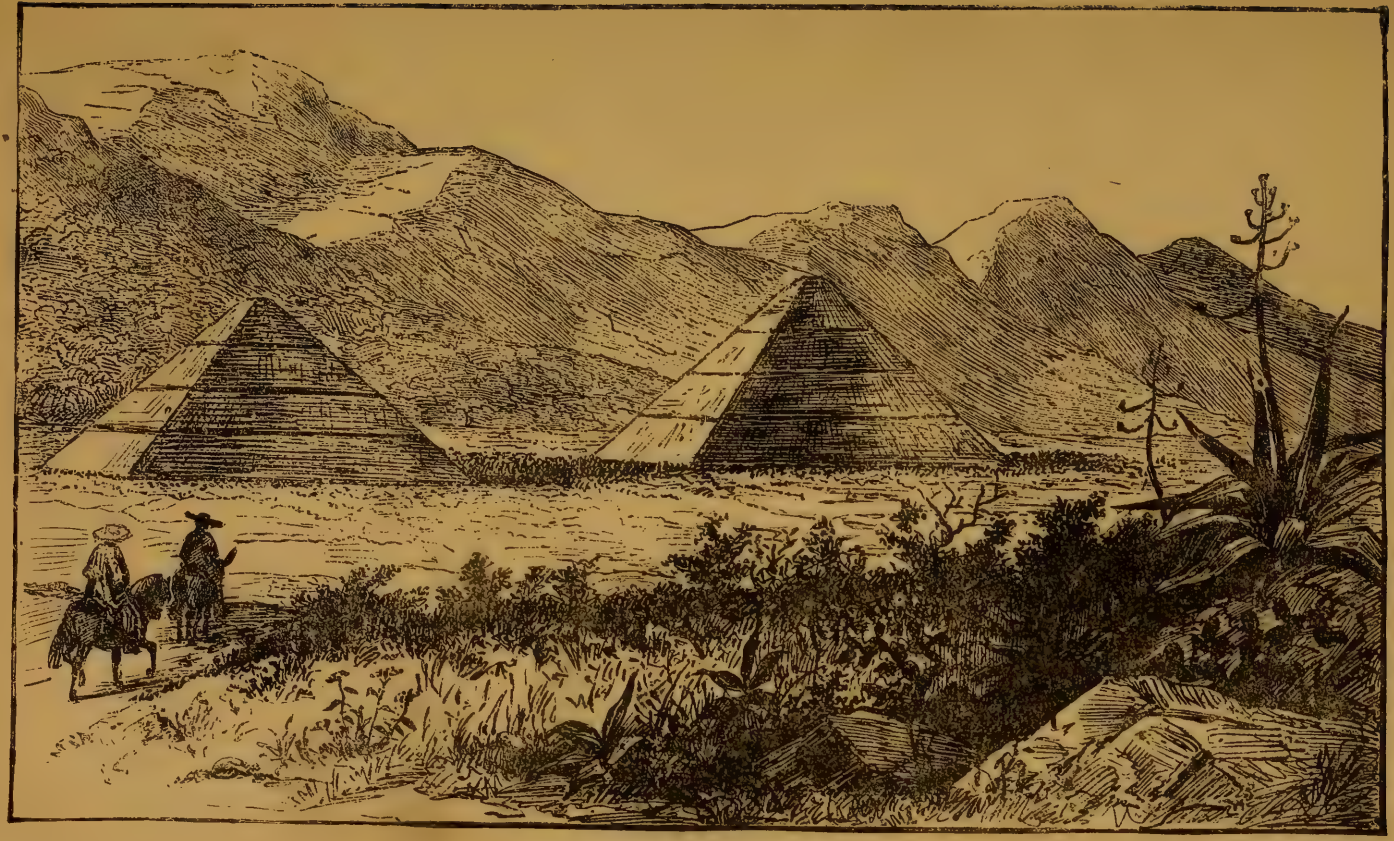
The oldest of these ruins, apparently — older even than those of Tula, or Tollan — are those of *Teotihuacan*, — the "City of the Gods," situated in the valley of Anahuac, about twenty-five miles from the present city of Mexico. There are two great pyramids here, called the "Pyramid of the Moon" and the "Pyramid of the Sun;" and, besides these, there are long rows, some miles in length, of mounds and smaller pyramids. The pyramid of the moon measures 426 feet long on one side at the base, by 511 feet on another, and is 137 feet high. There is a gallery leading in to a deep well in the centre of the pyramid. which is thought to contain treasure.

About 2700 feet from the pyramid of the moon is that of the sun, larger than the former, being about 735 feet square at the base and 203 feet high. It was called by the

ancients, *Tonatiuh Itzacual*, or "house of the sun." Both pyramids are built in terraces and have broad platforms at their summits, upon one of which was borne a statue of the sun and upon the other that of the moon, both covered with gold and glistening in the sun so that worshipers coming to this valley could see them many miles away. It is thought that the Spanish soldiers stripped off the golden coverings of the idols, and the statues themselves have long since disappeared; though there are yet some large carved blocks of stone to be found at the base of one of the pyramids.

It is said that this was the site of a great city, a holy place, where the priests of the people resided. The most perplexing and peculiar feature of these ruins is the broad avenue, lined on either side with mounds, two hundred and fifty feet wide, called in the native traditions, Micaotli, or "path of the dead." Many traditions refer to this place as a holy city, and not only the dwelling-place of the gods and priests, but that to which the kings of the different people came to be crowned. One historian relates what is said to have happened here once, towards the destruction of the Toltec empire. "The gods were very angry with the Toltecs, and to avert their wrath, a meeting of all the wise men, priests and nobles, was called at Teotihuacan, where the gods from most ancient times had been wont to hear the prayers of men.

"In the midst of the feasts and sacrifices an enormous demon with long bony arms and fingers, appeared dancing in the court where the people were assembled. Whirling through the crowd in every direction he seized upon the Toltecs that came in his way and dashed them at his feet. He appeared a second time, and the people perished by hundreds in his clutches. At his next appearance the demon assumed the form of a white and beautiful child, sitting on a rock and gazing at the holy city from a neighbor-



PYRAMIDS OF TEOTIHUACAN.

ing hill-top. As the people rushed in crowds to examine this strange creation, it was discovered that the child's head was a mass of corruption, the stench from which smote with death all who approached it. Finally the devil, or the god, appeared again and warned the Toltecs that their fate was sealed as a nation, and that they could only escape destruction by flight."

The visitor to this city of the gods to-day will find, scattered all over the surface of the pyramids and mounds, along the road of the dead and in the adjacent fields, numerous heads of clay, or terra cotta. They are grotesque in feature and singular in design. It is not known what use was made of them, why they were made in such quantities, nor why only heads are found, instead of entire figures having a body as well. It is thought by some that these idols were given by the priests, or holy men, to the crowds of worshipers who used to resort to this city of sanctuaries in these early times.

Whether those pyramids are Toltec, Olmec, or Totonac, it is very certain that they were built by a people who inhabited Anahuac long before the Aztecs arrived in it.

QUETZALCOATL, GOD OF THE AIR.

Before passing on to the people that succeeded the Toltecs in the valley of Mexico, let us glance at another pyramid of the past, belonging to this epoch, and at a great hero mentioned in Toltec traditions. We have seen that Tula was their capital and that there they lived in peace for many years. It was some time during their residence there that Quetzalcoatl, the "Feathered Serpent," appeared amongst them. He was a beneficent deity, who seemed to have taken the shape of a man in order to improve the condition of the people of earth. His name is constructed from two words, *Quetzal*, a bird of beautiful plumage found

in the forests of southern Mexico, and *Coatl*, a serpent, also found there — Quetzalcoatl, the "Plumed Serpent." The traditions, or legends, paint him as a tall, white man with a large beard, in complexion and general appearance very different from the Indians, among whom he lived, in Tula, as "God of the Air."

Everything prospered exceedingly during his stay, and the people wanted for nothing. He created large and beautiful palaces of silver, precious stones, and even of feathers. In his time corn grew so strong that a single ear was a load for a man, gourds were as long as a man's body, pumpkins were a fathom in circumference, while cotton grew on its stalks of all colors, red, yellow, scarlet, blue, and green. He taught the people all their wonderful arts: how to cut the precious green stone, the *chalchiuite*, and the casting of metals. He also had an incredible number of beautiful and sweet-singing birds, the like of which has not been seen in the country since his time.

But all this prosperity was to come to an end. There came amongst the people an evil-minded god called Tezcatlipoca, who wished to drive Quetzalcoatl from the country. So he appeared to him in the form of an old man, and told him that it was the will of the gods that he should be taken to Tlapalla. After drinking a beverage the old man offered him, the Plumed Serpent felt so strongly inclined to go that he set out at once, accompanied by many of his subjects. Near a city yet pointed out in the valley of Mexico, that of Quauhtitlan, he felled a tree with stones, which remained fixed in the trunk; and near Halnepantla he laid his hand on a stone and left an impression which the Mexicans showed the Spaniards after the conquest. Finally, on his way to the coast, he passed through the valley of Cholula, where the inhabitants detained him and made him ruler over their city.

He did not approve of the sacrifice of human beings, which some of the tribes performed in their worship, but he was a mild and benevolent being, and ordered that they offer to the gods only flowers and fruits.

After twenty years, he continued his journey, though the sorrowing Cholulans would have detained him longer. Taking with him four noble and virtuous youths, he set out for the province of Coatzcoalcos, on the Gulf of Mexico. Here he dismissed his attendants and launched upon the waters of the gulf alone, while they returned and ruled over Cholula for many years. It is said that Quetzalcoatl appeared upon the coast of Yucatan, where he was worshiped under the name of Kukulcan; and his image may be seen to-day, cut in the wall of one of the vast ruined edifices of Yucatan.

He promised his followers of Tula and of Cholula that he would some time return, and bring back to them the prosperity that had attended his coming. For everything changed when he left, and even the sweet-singing birds he sent before him to that mysterious kingdom in the east, the land of Tlapallan.

Now, this is but a tale of the priests, a legend of those early Mexicans, yet their descendants firmly believed in it, and looked for the promised return of the Feathered Serpent for hundreds of years. We shall find, farther on in this history, that the Aztecs believed in his coming and at first took the cruel Spaniards to be messengers from the mild and beneficent Quetzalcoatl. They thought they were messengers of life, these fierce and bloodthirsty demons of death!

THE PYRAMID OF CHOLULA.

Even at the arrival of the Spaniards, the city of Cholula was considered a holy place, the residence of the priests.

Its inhabitants raised here an immense mound in honor of Quetzalcoatl, with a temple on its summit dedicated to his worship. It was more than a mound, it was a *pyramid*, the largest in America, with a broader base even than any of those of Egypt. It covers a surface of more than forty



PYRAMID OF CHOLULA.

acres, is 1440 feet square at its base, and rises to a height of nearly two hundred feet. Though some ignorant writers have called this Pyramid of Cholula merely a natural hill, it has been proven to be wholly *artificial*. It is constructed of *adobe*, or sun-baked bricks, and is built in terraces with a broad platform at the top about two hundred feet square. It

is said that the bricks used in its construction came from Tlamanalco, several leagues distant, and were passed from hand to hand, along a long line of men. This statement, however, may well be questioned. But that it is built of bricks, any one who has seen it can testify. The writer of this history has himself examined it, and wondered at the evidence here shown of past labor, skill and patience. He has climbed its terraced sides and has looked over the plain that once held the city of the priests, across the fertile fields to the great volcanoes that reach the clouds with their crests of snow.

When Quetzalcoatl was alive — *when*, indeed — he issued his orders to the inhabitants of Tula by means of a crier, who ascended a mountain near by, called the "hill of shouting," and proclaimed the high priest's orders. The hill was so high, or the crier could shout so loud, that his voice could be heard for *one hundred leagues around.* It was very convenient for Quetzalcoatl to have such a crier as that, in those old days before the invention of telephones and railroads.

It is possible that he took this same great shouter with him to Cholula, and that he sent his marvelous voice far and wide over the valley, even to the crests of the surrounding mountains. We have diverged from our description of the different tribes, or nations, that invaded Anahuac, in order to describe these pyramids, these monuments of those most ancient of Mexican people, because they were the work, probably, of their hands.

We will now take leave of the Toltecs and glance at the next tribe that occupied the valley.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHICHIMECS.

[A. D. 1100.] NEARLY an age, or cycle (fifty-two years), passed after the scattering of the Toltecs before their territory was invaded by another tribe. Then came the Chichimecs into Anahuac. They were said by some historians to be the oldest nation in Mexico; but this is not so, though they had long existed there. Chichimec was a term also applied to all the unknown savage tribes, hence the confusion. At one time they were a barbarous people, and wandered about half-naked in the mountains, living in miserable huts. They took possession of all territory which they discovered unoccupied, became more civilized in the course of time, and established a monarchy which counted fourteen kings, and which lasted from 1120 to the coming of the Spaniards in 1520 — four hundred years.

Let us see how this powerful monarchy commenced. It was not long after those disasters that had overtaken the Toltecs, before the Chichimecs, living around the borders of that empire, found out that something had happened. They no longer saw the Toltecs on expeditions, nor met them in battles and skirmishes. Then they sent scouts into their territory, who returned with the astonishing tidings of the destruction of the nation and the abandonment of Tula. A little later they prepared to invade the land of their once powerful foes, who had ranked so high above them in the arts of civilization. They advanced cautiously, but wherever they settled they had come to stay, and so

they progressed until they reached the great valley of Anahuac. It belonged to them. They did not even have to conquer it, only to march in and possess themselves of it. The few Toltec families and bands of Toltecs they encountered they strove to incorporate into their society, and thus gained their good-will and the great advantage of their superior knowledge.

[12th Century.] Finally they established themselves on the eastern shore of Lake Tezcoco, the largest in the valley, and here commenced their capital city, under their leader, Xolotl (Holotl), whom they recognized as their king. They intermarried with the Toltecs, and thus gradually became more and more refined, learning from these unfortunate people the advantages to be derived from agriculture and mining, and the art of casting and working metals, spinning, weaving, and many other things, by which they improved their means of living, their clothing, their habitations and their manners.

Not many years had elapsed before another powerful tribe came into the valley, from a region not far distant from the original home of the Chichimecs. They were princes of the Acolhua nation, with a great army. Though their coming created much disturbance at first, King Xolotl received them kindly, and assigned them land on the western side of the lake. He also married two of the princes to his two daughters, and gave to the third a lady born of noble parents. So it came about, in the end, that the more refined of the Chichimecs dropped their old name, and came to be known as *Acolhuas*, and their kingdom as *Acolhuacan*. Those only were called Chichimecs who still pursued a savage life, and preferred the wandering life of a hunter to that of the peaceful agriculturist. They gradually strayed away, joining the barbarous Otomies, and formed those wild bands that worried the Spaniards for many years after they had conquered the others.

[13th Century.] After reigning about forty years, Xolotl died, and his son, Nopaltzin, occupied the throne; and he, after a period of disturbance, was succeeded by his son Holtzin. The most conspicuous of these Chichimec monarchs of that age was the next, the fourth, King Quinantzin. Until his time the court had not been held at Tezcoco entirely, but divided between that city and Tenayuca, on the other side of the lake. Now it was transferred to Tezcoco, and the king was borne on the shoulders of four of the principal lords of his kingdom, in a litter. He was the first to introduce such style and ceremony, and was much hated for it in consequence. He had a stormy reign, but at the last his kingdom was united and powerful.

When King Quinantzin died his body was embalmed, clothed in royal raiment, and placed in a chair, with bow and arrow in his hand, an image of an eagle at his feet and a tiger at his back, to signify his bravery, and exposed in this state to the people for forty days, after which he was burnt, and his ashes deposited in a cave in the mountains back of Tezcoco.

This Chichimec, or Tezcocan, dynasty really lasted for over four hundred years, and only ended in 1520, when the Spaniards invaded Mexico. Eleven chosen kings and two usurpers occupied the throne, including among them at least three so famous in the annals of Mexico as to deserve especial mention. These will be named in their proper place. Meanwhile, we must interrupt the chronological sequence, as relates to the kingdom of Tezcoco, to notice the arrival in the valley of Anahuac of other tribes destined to play important parts in the working out of the destiny of the Mexicans as a nation.

The Acolhuas (of whom mention has been made, and who were incorporated into the Chichimec confederacy) were followed by several other tribes, or nations, who were

assigned by the king at Tezcoco various places of residence about the great lake.

Of the Otomies, Xicalancas, and Tepanecs, we have already spoken. If we should go beyond the limits of the great Mexican valley, we should find that there were yet other peoples. There was the powerful nation of Michoacan, which, though the period of its foundation is not exactly known, is thought to have been contemporary with that of Anahuac. The people of this kingdom were the Tarascos, who were in no way less refined than the Acolhuans. Away down in Southern Mexico dwelt several other civilized nations: the Zapotecs, the Miztecs, the Chiapans, and the Mayas of Yucatan, whose history will be dwelt upon at length as we reach them in the course of events. If we confine ourselves to mentioning only the most powerful, and those which figured prominently in the subsequent wars with the Spaniards, it will be sufficient, without confusing the memory with a multitude of long Indian names of comparatively insignificant peoples.

At various times during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, different tribes came straggling into the valley of Anahuac. The most powerful of these belonged (it is thought) to one great nation, and spoke the same language. They were called *Nahuatlacas*, and came from the land of Aztlan. There were seven tribes: the Sochimilcas, the Chalchese, Tepanecas, Colhuas, Tlahuicas, Tlascallans, nad Mexicans.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AZTECS, OR MEXICANS.

[A. D. 1160.] WHERE was the land of Aztlan? the "country of herons," from which the seven tribes invaded Anahuac? We know not; various writers have assigned it as various positions, ranging all the way from the Gulf of California to the Gulf of Mexico. The preponderance of opinion, however, seems to be in favor of locating it in the north. Not that this was the *original* country of the Nahuatlacas, for it is believed, with great reason, that this — the birthplace of the race — was in the south! Migrating northward, they reached a point somewhere in Southern California, and thence they went no farther northward; they may have dwelt there for ages, until this great impulse came over them to return to the south, to the birthplace of these "children of the sun." But so much of their tradition as has been accepted as history, tells us only of Aztlan as their place of residence when the great migration commenced which was to re-populate the country deserted of the Toltecs.

[A. D. 1160.] Among the Aztecs, who dwelt in Aztlan, was a person of authority named Huitziton, who was desirous that his people should leave that country and seek another. One day, sitting beneath a tree, he heard — or pretended he heard — a little bird, constantly repeating in the Aztec tongue, "*tihui, tihui* — let us go! let us go!" Now, Huitziton took this to be a message from the gods, directing him and his companions to change their place of



VALLEY OF MEXICO.

residence. In those days people must have paid more attention to the voices of the birds than now, or must have given their utterances more significance. Who of us cannot recall some bird of our own land that would give us a similar message, if we would but construe it so? The singular thing about these bird-voices is, that they always speak in the language of the people they dwell amongst, and seem not to have an universal language of their own!

Well, this was enough for Huitziton and the deluded people who listened to him, and so they packed up what few things comprised their household effects, and began to travel. It is thought that all the seven tribes started together, or about the same time, but all had got into the valley of Mexico and comfortably settled before the Aztecs finally reached it. It is thought that they crossed the river Colorado near the head of the Gulf of California, and thence went southeastwardly. There are in that part of Mexico the ruins of great stone buildings, called the *casas grandes*, or great houses, which it is believed the Aztecs built in the halts during this migration. They were constructed on the same plan as those of New Mexico, where the Pueblo people live, with terraces, each floor, or story, reached only by ladders. They still kept marching southward in an aimless sort of way, impelled by an irresistible instinct, and we next hear of them at Chicomoztoc, or the *Place of Seven Caves*, which one writer thinks was near the present city of Zacatecas, where there are the remains of ancient buildings. Here six of the tribes separated from the Mexicans and went off independently, though they all subsequently met again in the Mexican valley. Here, or at some previous stopping-place, the Mexicans had made themselves a god of wood, which they called *Huitzilopochtli.* naming him probably from their leader, Huitziton, who was now dead. Four crafty men appointed themselves priests,

and gave out that it was by the orders of Huitziton, who they said was now an immortal god, that they had made the idol. They called themselves *Teomana*, or god-bearers, and ever after bore this senseless image on their shoulders.

Particular attention should be paid to these events, because from this time dated three important things: the change of the name of the people from Aztec to Mexican; the manufacture of that image of the god *Huitzilopochtli*, whose worship afterwards called for the sacrifice of millions of human beings; and the establishment of the priesthood — that curse to Mexico from that day to this!

The priests were not at all behind the Romish priests of the present day in craft and cunning, and had a communication ready from their god whenever the interest of their deluded subjects seemed to flag.

It must have been hard work for those god-bearers, this carrying of that heavy image (some writers think it was of stone, even at that time), but they were well rewarded for their pains in the respect and devotion of their followers. They had a message from Huitzilopochtli right away, to the effect that he had selected them as his own and only people, for whom he destined a glorious future — provided they always minded the priests, *who delivered this message;* and he ordered them to abandon the name of Aztec and adopt that of Mexican, and to wear upon their foreheads and ears a patch of gum and feathers as marks of their distinction. They were then presented with a net and bunch of arrows as insignia.

About this time, the legend runs, there mysteriously appeared two small bundles in the Mexican camp, which were the cause of the tribe being divided into two parties. One party secured in their bundle a very precious stone, and they thought they had the best of it when it was found that the bundle of the other party only contained

two sticks. From these two sticks, however, they obtained fire, which was far more useful to them than the gem, and which the other party would gladly have bargained their precious stone to obtain. This story the historians regard in the light of a fable, to teach us that the useful is always preferable to the beautiful. It served to account, also, for the division of the Mexicans into two parties, which remained distinct and jealous of one another for many years, held together only by their mutual interest in that worthless wooden god.

[A. D. 1196.] Finally, it is said, they reached the city of Tula, the ruined capital of the Toltecs, which had been abandoned nearly one hundred and fifty years before.

During all these years of travel they had moved leisurely; for, though they may have heard of the famous valley of Mexico, they had no special reason for reaching it at any particular time. It was as if we might set out on a voyage of discovery, looking for a place that suited us in its climate, soil, and appearance, and lingering on our way wherever the fancy struck us. It must also be borne in mind that it was necessary at times to make long halts, in order to plant and gather corn and cotton, and such things as they needed for food and apparel.

They stopped at Tula nine years. Here they had at last reached the northern verge of the Mexican valley; before them lay the promised land they were in future years to govern, where they were to erect an empire, the greatest, perhaps, in the New World, the fall of which was to include millions in its overthrow.

[A. D. 1216.] During the first years of the thirteenth century they advanced farther into the valley, which had become the objective point of so many tribes. At the city of Zumpango they were very well received by the lord of that place, Tochpanecatl, who not only entertained them

well, but married one of their noble virgins to his son, Ilhuicatl. From this union descended those famous kings of Mexico, who ruled the valley over a hundred years later.

It was during the reign of one of the first Chichimec kings, who, you will remember, entered Anahuac a century earlier, in about the year 1100. The king then in power, either Xolotl, or his son Nopaltzin, let them wander where they liked and settle where they would, having nothing to fear from such a wretched band of savages as the Mexicans were at that time.

Ah! if he could have foreseen the height which those despised Aztecs were to attain, and that even his own kingdom was one day to lie prostrate at their feet, do you not think he would have killed them, then and there?

As it was, however, he afforded them no protection — as, indeed, why should he? — and they suffered much from the persecutions of petty tribes established in the valley before them. They wandered from point to point about the great Lake Tezcoco, and finally made a stand at Chapultepec, a rocky hill, situated on the western border of the lake.

[A. D. 1245.] In the annals of the Mexicans, Chapultepec is called the "hill of the grasshopper" — *chapol* meaning grasshopper, and *tepec* hill. They gave it this name either because they found grasshoppers there in abundance, or because they were obliged to subsist upon them as their principal food.

This place, Chapultepec, became famous in later years as the resort and the burial-place of the Mexican kings, and just about *six hundred years* later a decisive battle was fought there between the soldiers of two nations that at that time had not been heard of, – the troops of the Republic of Mexico and the United States!



MEXICAN WAR-GOD, HUITZILOPOCHTLI.

Let us try to recall the date of Chapultepec's first appearance in history, when we shall, at a later period, wander beneath its cypress groves, with Montezuma, or heroes of a later generation.

[A. D. 1260.] After seventeen years at Chapultepec the Mexicans were driven thence to the southern borders of the lake, Tezcoco, where they existed for fifty years in a state of misery, feeding on fish and insects and reptiles of the marshes. They clothed themselves in garments of leaves, and their huts were made of the reeds and rushes surrounding the lake. They were free, however, and it is thought that they willingly endured these hardships rather than ally themselves with any other tribe.

But in the year 1314, they were made slaves by the Colhuas, who lived near the junction of the fresh-water lake of Chalco, or Xochimilco, with the salt-water lake of Tezcoco.

[A. D. 1320.] After they had been slaves some years a war broke out between the Colhuas and the Xochimilcas, both of whom were tribes that had separated from the Mexicans at the Place of the Seven Caves. The Colhuas were very willing the Mexicans should assist them in this war, but they provided them with no arms. Then the Mexicans armed themselves: they provided long poles, hardening their sharpened ends in the fire, knives of *itzli*, or obsidian (that *volcanic glass* peculiar to the country) and shields of reeds woven together; thus armed, they rushed upon the enemy. They had resolved to take no prisoners, as that would waste their time and retard their victory; but to cut off an ear from every man they captured and then to let him go. The Xochimilcas were terrified at the savage attacks of these fierce Mexicans, for they were fighting for freedom and fought their best, and they fled to the mountains.

When the Colhua soldiers came to show their captives,

after the battle, they laughed at the Mexicans because they had none. But when these artful savages opened their baskets of rushes and showed the great number of *ears* they had cut off, and explained that each ear represented a prisoner, and that they had done this in order to assure a more speedy victory, the Colhuas were silenced. They were so terrified at the prospect of having such terrible people among them as slaves, that they gave them their freedom and ordered them out of their country.

Perhaps they were all the more ready to do this when they were called upon by the Mexicans to witness a sacrifice in honor of their god, who had given them the victory. They had asked of the Colhuas something to place on the altar as an offering, and they had sent them a filthy bird. The Mexicans said nothing, but placed in its stead a knife and a fragrant herb. Then, after the King of the Colhuas and all his nobility were assembled, they brought out four Xochimilcan prisoners, whom they had concealed, and throwing them upon the altar cut out their hearts and offered them to their god, *Huitzilopochtli.* This event excited such horror that the Mexicans were at once driven forth to seek a new place of abode.

This should be noted as the first human sacrifice among them of which there is any record. It was the beginning of that terrible slaughter of men that afterwards drenched the altars of the Mexican god with blood.

The Mexicans left the south shore of Lake Tezcoco, and came at last to a point — an island, or a marshy spot — in the lake, not far from the former tarrying-place of Chapultepec, which they had left full sixty years before.

It must be remembered that we are not narrating the travels of a mighty nation, but of a battered tribe perhaps not large in number, and the petty fights and squabbles of insignificant clans, or bands; their greatness was of the future.

The Aztecs have been justly called the pests of Anahuac, for they seemed unwilling to live at peace with any other tribe. Owing to their fierce character and their bloody religious rites they were hated by all. The King of the Colhuas was a follower of the prophet of peace, *Quetzalcoatl*, and could not agree with the priests of the god of the Mexicans. We shall see by following this history to its termination how these priests brought final destruction to this people; such as has been the fate of all kingdoms founded in superstition and ruled by priests.

[A. D. 1325.] We now come to that period when the Mexicans were to cease their wanderings and to have a fixed abode. It was in the year 1325. They had tried to exist at many points about the lake, but had been driven from them all. They now fixed upon an island two or three miles from Chapultepec, in the lake Tezcoco. There the priests discovered an eagle, or bird of prey, perched upon a *nopal*, or prickly-pear, which grew out of the crevices of a rock on this small island. This the priests declared to be in accordance with an oracle communicated to them by their god, *Huitzilopochtli*, and here they built a hut of rushes and reeds to serve temporarily as a temple for their cherished idol. Some say that the nopal grew in the middle of a lovely pool, into which two of the priests dove down and had an interview with old *Tlaloc*, the god of waters, who told them they had at last reached the spot predicted by their oracle, and there to build their city. In this manner was founded the city of *Tenochtitlan*, "which in future times was to become the court of a great empire, and the largest and most beautiful city in the new world." Around the temple of their idol they built their rude huts of grass and reeds, and called this nucleus of a city, Mexico, or the place of *Mexitli*, their war-god, this being another name for the god Huitzilopochtli. Their first human

sacrifice had been attended with such good results that they resolved to celebrate the building of the new temple — humble though it was — by the taking of another victim's life. They captured one of their enemies, and cutting out his heart with a sharp knife of flint, or obsidian, offered it to their god. Thus was baptized with blood the foundation stone of Mexico, a city that two centuries later was to be wrested from the race that built it, attended by the slaughter of thousands. The condition of the Mexicans was yet very wretched, for they had made enemies of all the tribes in Anahuac, and had to depend upon their sole exertions. Their island, in the first place, was too small, and to remedy this they dug ditches and canals, and banked up the marshy places to form gardens and building spots. For food, they depended upon fish and the reptiles and insects of the lake, and at the end of the rainy season the lake was covered — even as at the present day — by innumerable water-fowl. It was at this period, or a little previous, that they constructed those wonderful *floating gardens*, upon which they raised their corn and vegetables.

There has been much dispute over this subject, as to whether the ancient Mexicans ever really had any such things as these floating gardens, as none of them can be found at the present day. There is no doubt that they did have them, for if we take into account the nature of their surroundings: with no firm land extensive enough for cultivation, and the nearest shore in possession of enemies, we must see that it was necessary for them to have something of the kind. It is said that they wove together willows and rushes, and upon this floating framework piled grass, leaves, and mud, thus forming a very fertile soil, always moist and extremely productive. These little gardens they could tow about from place to place after their canoes; but though writers of a century ago or more claim



FLOATING GARDENS.

to have seen these *chinampas*, or floating gardens, none have existed within the memory of people now living. What are now called by that name are squares of firm land surrounded by ditches, which may at one time have formed these gardens, but which have been left by the falling of the lake, and no longer float. Upon these they raised their limited supply of vegetables: corn, peppers, *chia*, beans, and gourds, or pumpkins.

[A. D. 1338 or 1340.] It was not long that this quarrelsome people could live together without fighting amongst themselves, and ten or fifteen years after the founding of the city the two parties — the Mexicans and the Tlatelolcans — separated, the latter going to a still smaller island near the main one. The Mexicans, however, kept the god, and, though their neighbors were more progressive at first, were in the end triumphant. Though for a while each faction had a separate government and its king, the Mexican is the one that finally absorbed the other, and whose history we shall mainly follow.

Before we close this chapter we are obliged to chronicle another deed of blood that disgraced this degraded people. Their god, through his servants the priests, had given out that they must have a maiden of foreign birth to be created the "mother of the gods." They sent to the King of the Colhuas, and asked him for his daughter to be erected to this high place in their catalogue of deities. Very much flattered, the unsuspecting chief sent his beloved daughter, whom the Mexicans conducted in triumph to their capital. There, at the command of the priests, this innocent maiden was killed and flayed, and one of the young braves of the tribe clothed in her skin. The unfortunate king was then sent for to do homage to this mother of the gods. He entered the temple with a censer in his hand, and was about to begin his worship when he discovered in the dark-

ness that horrible spectacle of the youth clothed in the bloody skin of his unfortunate daughter. Stricken with anguish, the miserable monarch fled from the temple, calling upon his people to avenge this terrible outrage. The Mexicans were too powerful to be punished as they deserved, and the wretched father returned to his residence to mourn his daughter the remainder of his life.

The king's daughter was thus created a goddess, and as such was regarded by the Mexicans, under the name of *Tetoinan*, or "mother of all the gods."

CHAPTER V.

THE RIVAL POWERS OF ANAHUAC.

[A. D. 1350–1431.] In 1350, the Mexicans elected their first king, *Acamapichtli.* This was done without the consent of the King of the Tepanecs, who resided at Azcapozalco, on the mainland, and to whom they paid tribute. The Tepanec king forthwith doubled their tribute, and also imposed several very hard conditions for their remaining in Mexico. He ordered them to bring to his capital several thousand willow and fir trees, and to plant them in the gardens of Azcapozalco, as well as one of their floating gardens, with all their vegetables growing on it. The next year he commanded them to bring him one of these *chinampas*, with a duck and a swan sitting on their eggs, and at such a time that they would hatch upon arrival at his court. Next year's command was that they should bring him one of these gardens with a live deer on it, knowing that they would have to go to the mountains, amongst tribes at war with them, to procure it.

They fulfilled all their obligations, owing to the help given them by their god, and patiently waited for the time when they should be freed from the exactions of the king; they are said to have endured them for fifty years. The founding of the city of Mexico, in 1325, was during the reign, probably, of the Chichimec king, Quinantzin, with whom we closed the account of that people in chapter the third. He was succeeded by King Techotl, who was fol-

lowed by Ixtlilxochitl, in the first years of the fifteenth century, probably in 1406.

[A. D. 1389.] Acamapichtli, King of the Mexicans, died in 1389, and the throne was given to the brave *Huitzili-*



MEXICAN WARRIOR.

huitl. He was a young man and unmarried, and some of the nobles went to the King of the Tepanecs, their master, and humbly besought him to give them his daughter to be married to their king. The following speech, put in their

mouths by the historian, will illustrate their abasement and their cunning: "Behold, great lord, the poor Mexicans at your feet, humbly expecting from your goodness a favor which is greatly beyond their merit. Behold us hanging upon your lips, and waiting only your signals to obey. We beseech you, with the most profound respect, to take compassion upon our master and your servant, Huitzilihuitl, confined among the thick rushes of the lake. He is without a wife, and we without a queen. Vouchsafe, sir, to part with one of your jewels, or most precious feathers. Give us one of your daughters, who may come to reign over us in a country which belongs to you."

The king was not proof against this sort of flattery. He gave them his daughter, and she was married to King Huitzilihuitl, by the usual ceremony of tying the skirts of their robes together. Having strengthened himself by the possession of this "precious feather," the crafty king procured another wife, also the daughter of a neighboring lord. There is no knowing how many wives he did get, for he was very anxious to strengthen Mexican relations with their neighbors, and there was no law against his marrying as many as he pleased.

Techotl, the King of Tezcoco, was yet ruler over the valley, and in suppressing an extensive rebellion he called upon the kings of Mexico and Azcapozalco to aid him. As they returned covered with glory they acquired respect from the surrounding tribes. Under Huitzilihuitl, the Mexicans prospered as never before; they began to wear clothes of cotton, having had till this time only coarse garments made of the threads of the wild palm, and perhaps of the *maguey*.

[A. D. 1402.] The Tlaltelolcos, the people forming the other division of Mexico, had also elected a king, and for many years there was a great rivalry between them and the

Mexicans. But King Huitzilihuitl dug canals, erected fine buildings, multiplied the *chinampas*, and trained soldiers, using so much vigilance and energy that the Tlatelolcos were left behind in the march of improvement. Eventually, as the marshes between the two cities were filled up, they were only separated by a canal, and the rival factions were united into the more powerful government of Mexico.

In 1402 the Mexicans celebrated the closing of one of their cycles, or centuries, with greater magnificence than any since they had left their homes in Aztlan. Their prosperity was assured, their position unshaken.

Ixtlilxochitl, son of Techotl, succeeded his father upon the throne of Tezcoco. At his inauguration, all the princes or petty kings of his dominion were ordered to assemble at the capital to witness the ceremony and acknowledge him emperor. The King of Azcapozalco was ambitious to be at the head of affairs in Anahuac, and absented himself from the court at the time when he should have been present. He stirred up a rebellion that involved many of the lords of the valley, and finally Ixtlilxochitl marched upon him with the royal army. After three years of fighting, Tezozomoc, the King of Azcapozalco, sued for peace, and the Tezcocan army was withdrawn from his territories. But this was an artifice, and as soon as Ixtlilxochitl had disbanded his army, he found himself in great danger from his cunning foe, who pursued him even to the mountains, where he was finally murdered, or died in misery.

[A. D. 1410.] The year previous, Huitzilihuitl, King of Mexico, had died, and his brother, Chimalpopoca, was appointed king. It seems to have been established as a law at that time, that on the decease of a king one of his brothers should be appointed to the throne, or, if he had no brothers, one of his grandsons. The tyrant, Tezozomoc, was now ruler of Anahuac, having, at the death of Ixtlilxo-

chitl, swept the valley with his armies. He gave Tezcoco to Chimalpopoca to be lord over, and another city, Huexotla, to Tlacatcotl, King of Tlatelolco, as rewards for their assistance.

Azcapozalco was proclaimed as the royal capital and the seat of power, with Tezozomoc as emperor. As mistress of the valley, Tezcoco had fallen from her high position; the Chichimec dynasty was no longer to control the Mexican world, though in a few years the ancient capital was to revive its glory by becoming the centre of art and culture. The legitimate heir to the crown, *Nezahualcoyotl*, son of Ixtlilxochitl, was now a fugitive, with a price set upon his head by Tezozomoc the usurper.

For nine years, the tyrant held the throne of Tezcoco, with his capital at Azcapozalco. He was now very old, and approaching his end; not having within him sufficient vitality to keep him warm he was kept wrapped in cotton, in a great willow basket like a cradle. His hatred of the Tezcocan prince continued to his last breath, and as he had not been able to put him to death, he charged this unpleasant duty upon his sons, his successors to the kingdom. He was greatly troubled by hideous dreams, in all of which figured Nezahualcoyotl, the young prince he had driven from his home. He dreamed that this foe was at one time changed into an eagle, and in this shape tore open his breast and ate his heart; at another, in the form of a lion, he licked his body and sucked his blood.

[A. D. 1422.] Tormented with fears for the future of his kingdom and for his own miserable life, Tezozomoc expired, in the year 1422. The kings of Mexico were in attendance as mourners at his funeral, as also was the Prince of Tezcoco, whom the sons of Tezozomoc wished to kill, but dared not from fear of the people.

Chimalpopoca, King of Mexico, lost his throne and his

life at this time under peculiar circumstances. Tezozomoc had left the kingdom to his son *Tajatzin*, but another son, *Maxtla*, took possession of it. Tajatzin complained of this injustice to Chimalpopoca, and was advised by the Mexican king to kill his brother at an entertainment which he should prepare. This Maxtla heard of, and acted so promptly that he not only killed Tajatzin, but succeeded finally in making captive Chimalpopoca himself.

When the King of Mexico sent his annual tribute to Azcapozalco, consisting of fish, cray-fish and frogs, accompanied by a polite message to the king as lord of the valley, Maxtla showed his contempt for him by sending back by the embassadors a woman's gown, thereby implying that the Mexican king was a coward. After this insult, which Chimalpopoca was unable to avenge, Maxtla succeeded in getting a favorite wife of his enemy into his power, and after doing her all the injury he was capable of, he sent her back to her husband in tears and misery.

Chimalpopoca resolved, as he could not take revenge on the tyrant, to *sacrifice himself* as an offering to his god, Huitzilopochtli. This, in his opinion, and in the eyes of his people, would wipe out the insult, to him as a king, and to the nation he ruled over. Dressed in the garb of sacrifice, the unfortunate king was led to the temple, where the priests stood ready to plunge into his breast the knife of flint, and to tear out his troubled heart and offer it to their god. But the tyrant anticipated this event and despatched troops to the temple, who seized Chimalpopoca and hurried him to Azcapozalco, where they confined him in a strong wooden cage. Here he was visited by the fugitive Prince of Tezcoco, to whom he related his woes, and besought him to remember his poor people, the Mexicans, if he should succeed in gaining again the ancient throne of Acolhua. Then, giving him a golden pendant from his

upper lip, and his ear-rings, which had once been worn by his famous brother, Huitzilihuitl, he charged him to escape at once from the dominions of Maxtla.

[A. D. 1423.] That night, the unhappy king ended his



MEXICAN PRIEST.

life by hanging himself in his cage by his girdle; and thus perished Chimalpopoca, third king of Mexico, in or about the year 1423.

His reign had lasted about thirteen years, during which

he had gained some victories over his enemies, and had, in the eleventh year, brought into his capital two great stones of sacrifice, one for ordinary prisoners, and one for gladiatorial combats.

The Mexicans lost no time in electing another king, who should be better qualified to cope with the tyrant; and this time they chose the brave *Itzcoatl*, a man of war from his youth, who had commanded the Mexican armies for thirty years.

In the meantime, Nezahualcoyotl, Prince of Tezcoco, had fled from Azcapozalco, by crossing the lake in a canoe with strong rowers. The tyrant organized a swift pursuit, but the prince succeeded in escaping his enemies, and in visiting all the important tribes in the valley, even penetrating to the province of Tlascala. Nearly all had become disgusted with the usurper, Maxtla, and promised aid to the prince in a great revolt against him. Aided by these allies he soon captured Tezcoco and several other cities once belonging to the ancient kingdom.

The King of Mexico, Itzcoatl, sent an embassador to congratulate him on these victories, and to assure him of the assistance of the Mexicans at the time when the final assault should be made on Azcapozalco.

This mission was an extremely difficult undertaking, for, though Tezcoco and Mexico were only fifteen miles apart, the roads and the lake were closely guarded by the tyrant to prevent communication between his foes. It was entrusted to the bravest man in all Mexico, a son of the former king, Huitzilihuitl, called *Montezuma*, who, by his invincible courage, had obtained the name of *Ilhui-camina*, or "Archer of Heaven." He succeeded in delivering his message, but in returning was captured by the troops of *Toteotzin*, lord of Chalco, and condemned to death. Through the humanity of his jailer he was allowed to escape, and returned to Mexico where he was received with great rejoicings.

[A. D. 1425.] The populace of Mexico were terrified at the prospect of a war with the tyrant, Maxtla, and tried to dissuade their king from such a desperate measure. It is related that finally they entered into a compact by which, if victory crowned their efforts, the common people were to be forever the slaves of the nobility, but if defeat, then the latter were to be sacrificed at their pleasure. This was the origin of the condition of things that prevailed at the coming of the Europeans, a century later, when the rich and powerful nobility dominated over a servile, degraded people.

A declaration of war was sent to King Maxtla, and again no one could be found to undertake this dangerous mission but Montezuma. It was only four miles from capital to capital, but nearly all the way through the enemy's lines. On his return, having reached a position of safety, he taunted the guards of the tyrant with negligence in having allowed him to escape, and boasted that he would soon return and destroy them all. They rushed upon him to kill him, but he slew two of them, and then retreated rapidly to Mexico, conveying to the trembling inhabitants the declaration of war.

There is no more brilliant figure in Mexican history than this dauntless Indian, the first and the greatest Montezuma, risking his life in the cause of his people. Word was at once sent to Nezahualcoyotl to join his troops with the Mexicans, and the next day the Tepanec army — King Maxtla's — appeared in the field, adorned with gold and feathers, and shouting in anticipation of victory.

Knowing that upon their bravery the fate of their respective nations depended, each army attacked the other with terrible fury. King Itzcoatl led the Mexicans, having a little drum on his shoulder, by the sound of which he gave them signals for attack. At the close of a long day's fight-

ing the Mexicans were about to give way, and had already promised the Tepanecs to sacrifice their nobles and generals to appease their wrath, when Montezuma rushed upon the opposite leader, and by a furious blow laid him lifeless on the field. This turned the tide of battle, and the Tepanecs fled to their city, pursued by the Mexicans and Tezcocans. The next day the battle was renewed, the city was taken, and the Tepanecs dispersed in every direction. King Maxtla was found hidden in a *temazcalli*, or vapor bath, and killed, and his body cast into the fields. By this victory, which occurred in the year 1425, just one century after the foundation of Mexico — Tenochtitlan — the Mexicans obtained the ascendency in Anahuac; thenceforward they were its actual masters. Azcapozalco, the Tepanec capital, was razed to the ground, and in the future was used as a market-place for slaves.

The King of Mexico held the people to their contract, by which they had agreed to cultivate the lands for the generals and nobles, to build their houses, and to carry for them their arms and baggage when they went to war; they were virtually their slaves. After the victory, the united armies marched around the valley, subdued all disaffected and rebellious tribes, and ended by entering Tezcoco, and placing Nezahualcoyotl upon the throne of his ancestors, from which he had been debarred by Tezozomoc and Maxtla for fifteen years. With this act was completed the restoration of the Chichimec monarchy, although its dominion was restricted, whereas before it was unlimited. The balance of power was held by the Mexicans, over whom reigned Itzcoatl.

It must have been a great temptation to the Mexican king to make himself Emperor of Anahuac, and prevent his ally from ascending the throne of Tezcoco, when he had it so fully in his power. Instead of this he showed

himself a monarch truly great, by considering the general welfare and the claims of others before his own aggrandizement. He divided the territory of Anahuac into three kingdoms, placing a surviving son of Tezozomoc over the Tepanecs, with his capital at *Tacuba*. Nezahualcoyotl's capital was Tezcoco, east of the great lake; while Mexico, ruled over by Itzcoatl, lay between the two,—mistress of the valley and arbiter of its destinies. The many feudatories, or petty lordships, were placed either under the control of one or the other of the three, and peace for awhile reigned again in Anahuac. This triple alliance took place in the year 1426, or, according to some authorities, in 1431.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRIPLE KINGDOM.

[A. D. 1426.] THOUGH the small kingdom of Tacuba formed one of the allied powers, it took very little part in the future conquests, except to lend its aid to one or the other of its powerful neighbors, and take its small portion of the spoils. Mexico, under Itzcoatl, and with her armies commanded by the brave Montezuma, extended her conquests in all directions. The monarch of Tezcoco had evidently had enough of war and bloodshed; in his years of wanderings, in the many skirmishes and fights in which he had passed his youth, he had gained the true knowledge that the victories of peace are to be preferred over those of war.

The unsettled condition in which the Acolhua kingdom had been left by twenty years of misrule rendered it necessary for its sovereign to give it all his attention. He established councils, civil and military, for the trial of persons charged with crime; he formed schools for the study of poetry, astronomy, music, painting, and history, as well as of the art of divination. These arts were in a very rude state, and little, of course, could result from their study, without the art of writing, or printing, to convey ideas. He divided the city of Tezcoco into over thirty districts; in one dwelt the goldsmiths, in the other the sculptors, in another the weavers, and so on. He built temples and great houses, and planted groves, some of which are in existence at the present day.

[A. D. 1436.] Nezahualcoyotl, as we have seen, left to his cousin, the King of Mexico, the subjecting of other tribes, and seems to have felt no distrust or envy of the growing power of the Mexicans. And it is worthy of notice that, while the names of his contemporaries have hardly survived the bloody kingdom they fought so hard to aggrandize, that of the King of Tezcoco has come down to us the subject of many eulogies by the native historians. When we come to the year of his death, we shall mention more in detail the glories of his reign.

Let us turn our attention to that growing capital of the Mexicans, which seemed ambitious to reach its arms from sea to sea. The fierce followers of Itzcoatl took the leading part in every contest in which the allied armies were engaged; "they became practically masters of the whole country, and were on the point of subjugating even their allies, or of falling before a combination of their foes, when they fell before a foe from across the sea."

During the reign of Itzcoatl a difference arose between him and the Tezcocan monarch as to who was best entitled to the great title of *Chichimecatl Tecuhtli*, or chief of the Chichimec empire. As one who occupied the ancient Chichimec throne, Nezahualcoyotl was deemed to have the best claim to this honor, though by the aid of Mexican troops and the courtesy of their king, he had been re-established in his position. "Yet," says one writer, "although Itzcoatl and his successors by their valor and desire of conquest took a leading part in all wars, and were in a sense masters of Anahuac, there is no sufficient evidence that they ever claimed any superiority in rank over the Acolhua (Tezcocan) monarch, or that any important difficulties occurred between the two powers until the last years of the Aztec period."

Itzcoatl died in the year 1436, having commanded the

armies for thirty years, and served thirteen as king. *Montezuma Ilhuicamina* was naturally the choice of the electors for the crown, and once again a valiant leader of the Mexican armies was called to the throne. According to the horrid custom, which had now become fixed, Montezuma sallied forth to secure prisoners, to be sacrificed at his coronation. There resided about Lake Chalco, which you may see in a map of the Valley of Mexico, the nation of the same name, the Chalcas, or the Chalchese. Their ancient capital yet exists on the border of the lake, though only as a modern Mexican town of no great importance. They were the people who had captured Montezuma, during the reign of Maxtla, when he, a young man then, had gone to them in the character of embassador. He had never forgotten that they had intended to put him to death, and now he entered their territory to make horrible reprisals. He marched against them in person, took many prisoners, and then went back to Mexico and gave them to the priests to be sacrificed upon the altars.

[A. D. 1440.] From the allied kings and from the tribes that paid them tribute he received a vast amount of treasure, gifts of gold, silver, and feathers, game and provisions. The coronation ceremonies lasted many days, and abounded in all the barbarous pastimes indulged in by those people. He constructed a new temple, in addition to two others his predecessor had built, and in 1441 the relics of an ancient chief, *Mixcohuatl*, a Toltec who had been much venerated in centuries past, were taken to Mexico, where a temple was built for them. It seems to have been during Montezuma's reign that the custom originated of taking all the gods captured in battle from their enemies and depositing them in Mexico. There they were allowed to remain, honored alike by friend and foe, but, like their former owners, subordinate to the great Huitzilopochtli.

[A.D. 1443.] The Chalcas, who were always committing some untoward deed, — or who were said to by the Mexicans, in order that they might have a pretext for sacrificing them, — captured two sons of Nezahualcoyotl and killed them. The lord of that city was thought to be the same Toteotzin who had meditated the killing of Montezuma, years before. He ordered these royal princes to be killed, and then had their bodies embalmed and placed them in his banquet hall as torch-bearers, — holding in their black and shrivelled hands the pine torches that gave their light. The King of Tezcoco called upon his royal brother for aid, and the Mexicans gladly responded, for they were ever like tigers famishing for blood. They sacked and ruined the city, killed the ruler and drove the survivors to the mountains.

Sometime about this period King Nezahualcoyotl was married to the daughter of the King of Tacuba, who rejoiced in a name almost as long as her royal lover's, — *Matlalcihuatzin* — said to be a beautiful and modest virgin. It was more than this old reprobate deserved, for he had already many children by various concubines, the total number at his death being one hundred. He manifested great affection for them, but at the same time always put to death any of them that disobeyed him with an alacrity that makes one think he considered them altogether too many.

But he made a great rejoicing at the time he was legitimately married, the entertainments lasting eighty days. And he composed a poem, comparing the shortness of life and its pleasures with the fleeting bloom of a flower. This was sung by his musicians, and proved so affecting that there was hardly a dry eye in the crowd. It commenced: *Xochitl mamani in ahuehuetitlan*, and went on in this pathetic strain, drawing tears from the eyes of hardened old

Aztecs who had looked upon the tortures of thousands of victims upon the sacrificial block unmoved. A year later a son was born, *Nezahualpilli*, who succeeded in due time to the crown.

Elated at the continued success of their arms, the Mexicans ravaged province after province and sent home crowds of prisoners to be murdered on their sacrificial altars. Under Montezuma, they carried their victories to points one hnndred and fifty miles distant; they enlarged their temple to their principal god, and enriched it with spoils.

[A. D. 1446] — Mexico, you will remember, was built upon an island in Lake Tezcoco. There are five great lakes in the Mexican valley, four of them are fresh and the fifth, Tezcoco, is salt. All the other lakes are at a higher elevation than the salt lake, and three of them higher than the city itself, even at the present day. And so it happens, that whenever a great rain occurs, and the higher lakes are flooded, the waters rush down into Lake Tezcoco, which has no outlet, and are liable to overflow the city. The first of these inundations of which we have any mention occurred in the year 1446. Montezuma and the Mexicans were greatly distressed by this great flood, which rose so high that all the streets were filled and the people compelled to go about in canoes. The king consulted with Nezahualcoyotl and by the advice of this sagacious monarch he commenced a great dike, to cross the lake, and render it independent of the floods from the fresh-water lakes. It was nine miles in length and consisted of a double row of piles thirty feet apart, with the space between filled with earth and stones. The lords of the valley themselves labored, to incite the vassals to activity, and this mighty work was soon finished.

[A. D. 1448.] In the years 1448 and 1449 there was a

great famine, first from the inundation and then from frost, so that the corn crop, the *maize* upon which they almost solely depended for food, was a failure. The two following years were likewise unfavorable, and in the year 1452 many people of Mexico died of starvation. Many others wandered into the neighboring county and sold themselves into slavery for a little corn, their needs were so great, even though the royal granaries were opened. The king published a proclamation, that no woman should sell herself as a slave for less than four hundred ears of maize, and no man for less than five hundred. As in the olden time, before Mexico was founded, the Aztecs now lived upon water-fowl, small fish and insects, which they caught in and about the lake. There is a peculiar water insect called the *axayacatl*, which lays its eggs on the water, among the rushes of Lake Tezcoco. Their eggs, when gathered and pressed together, form a substance like cheese, and this the inhabitants of Mexico subsisted upon, even as many of their descendants do at the present time.

[A. D. 1454.] Even the famine, which lasted nearly six years, did not interrupt the dreadful sacrifices. The priests gave out that the gods were angry, and more blood must be shed to appease them. You will perhaps hardly credit the story, but it is related that in order to gratify the priests and to cause their gods to relent, some tribes entered into a compact to regularly fight one another, that the victors might have prisoners to sacrifice to these bloodthirsty deities. Half-starved men and women might have been obtained in every town, but the gods were not satisfied with their blood, they wanted the rich life-current of brave and stalwart soldiers!

[A. D. 1455.] At last the famine ceased, and plenty once more came to the stricken land, just as a new cycle entered upon its rounds. This they attributed to their

having finally appeased the outraged gods, just as the Mexicans, two centuries later, thought to stay the progress of an inundation by bringing into the city an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. These people, the Mexicans, always had blood in their eyes, and no sooner was the famine allayed than they again marched into the surrounding country in search of victims.

[A. D. 1456.] That portion of the capital known as Tlatelolco had become the commercial metropolis of the country. To it people resorted from the remotest parts of Mexico, and from it went out large bands of travelling merchants. These merchants had so increased in number and strength, and always went so strongly armed, that they were very oppressive to the tribes they went amongst, and often committed murders and robberies. They also acted for the Mexicans in the capacity of spies; many a rich province had they entered, in the guise of peaceful traders, only to spy out its resources in wealth and prisoners. A band of these land pirates had been maltreated by the Miztecs, people who dwelt — as do their descendants to-day — in the country south of the Mexican valley. No doubt these rascally traders had deserved all they got, but they came back to their homes with such a doleful story that Montezuma resolved at once to punish the Miztecs for the outrage. He was only too glad of a pretext against them, for the supply of victims for that hideous god in the temple was running short. So he sent to the King of the Miztecs demanding an apology. But *Atonaltzin*, this Miztec king, treated the embassadors of Montezuma with scorn. He loaded them with gold, and said, as he dismissed them, "Bear this present to your king, that he may know from it how much my subjects give me, and how much they love me; tell him that I willingly accept of war, by which it shall be decided whether my subjects shall pay tribute to

the King of Mexico or the Mexicans to me." Then the allied kings united their armies, and marched upon the King of the Miztecs; but they got terribly whipped, and for once returned to Mexico without their prisoners. This enraged the great Montezuma, so that he raised another army, and led it in person; and as in the past, so it was at this time, nothing could stand before him. The Miztecs were defeated, and he took possession of their capital.

[A. D. 1457.] In this year an expedition was undertaken by the Mexicans against a nation in the south-east, towards the Gulf of Mexico. After the army had started Montezuma, hearing the forces of the army were far in excess of his own, sent to recall them. The Mexicans would have returned, but *Moquihuix*, King of the Tlaltelolcans, declared that he would go on, and with his own people alone vanquish the enemy. Animated by his words and example they encountered the enemy, and carried back over six thousand prisoners, to be sacrificed at the consecration of a temple for the preservation of skulls.

Montezuma rewarded this victorious prince by giving him one of his cousins for his wife,— of which great honor he could not have been duly sensible, for he afterwards abused her heartily.

DESTRUCTION OF THE CHALCHESE.

[A. D. 1458.] By this time those rebellious people of Chalco had recovered sufficiently to again defy the Mexicans. They captured a brother of Montezuma, and wanted to make him king over them, and make their city a rival to that of Mexico. This he looked upon as treason; but he finally pretended to consent, and told them to plant one of their tallest trees in the market-place and erect a scaffold upon it, in order that he might view his new subjects from this high position. When this was done he mounted to the

dizzy height, with a bunch of flowers in his hand, and made a speech to the few Mexicans who had been made prisoners with him: "Ye know well," he said, "my brave Mexicans, that the Chalchese wish to make me their king; but it is not agreeable to our god that I should betray our native country. I choose rather to teach you by my example to place a higher value on fidelity to it than upon life itself." Saying this, he cast himself headlong to the ground and perished. By this act the Chalchese were so enraged that they slew all the Mexicans with darts. It is said that the dismal hooting of an owl that night threw them into superstitious terror as an omen of their destruction. Nor were they far wrong, for as soon as Montezuma heard the news, he caused the hill-tops about Chalco to blaze with signal fires; and ere they had died away he marched upon the rebels with his army. This time he left nothing of their city, nor saved man, woman or child that his enraged troops could discover in it. Again were the Chalchese driven to the mountains, there to wander for many years, living in holes and caverns.

[A. D. 1460.] Tenochtitlan, or Mexico, and Tlaltelolco, into which the capital had been originally divided, had now so extended themselves on every side that only a single canal now separated them. This was widened and deepened, and made into a navigable water-way, through which passed the boats laden with vegetables from the *Chinampas*.

[A. D. 1474.] After having seen the Mexican dominion widely extended, north, east, south, and west,— after having erected a great temple to the god of war, and having shed the blood of thousands upon its altars, the great and glorious Montezuma died. He had been one of the wisest and bravest of the Mexican leaders, had made many civil and religious laws, had increased the splendor of his court,



MEXICAN ARMOR, SHIELDS AND SWORD.

and had added largely to that dread band of fanatics, the priests, who were engaged in hurrying this empire to its ruin.

The fifth King of Mexico, successor to Montezuma, was *Axajacatl*, a valiant general of the army. Having received news of his election he marched into the south upon the terrible mission of securing prisoners to grace by their sacrifice his coronation. In this expedition his troops penetrated as far south as *Tehuantepec*, many miles from the capital. Tehuantepec is the narrowest portion of Mexican territory, only about a hundred miles here intervening between the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and those of the Pacific. To-day, in our time, it is about to be opened by a railroad, and it has often been examined with reference to the cutting there of a ship canal, which may form a great highway between the seas of the two hemispheres.

The Mexican general defeated the inhabitants of Tehuantepec, after hard-fought battles, and dragged the wretched prisoners over all the long distance to Mexico, to mingle their blood with that of the thousands who had preceded them.

[A. D. 1466]. It is told that in this year, the famous causeway and aqueduct to Chapultepec was completed. It had been planned by Nezahualcoyotl and commenced by Itzcoatl. It supplied the Mexican capital with water, as that surrounding the city was salt and unfit to drink.

All the time, the people were working hard at the building of new temples, and many *teocallis*, or holy pyramids were built in the three allied capitals. The most noted one outside of Mexico was that constructed by Nezahualcoyotl, highly ornamented with gold and precious stones, and dedicated to the "*invisible god of the universe*" — not to an idol of stone.

[A. D. 1469]. The slumbering jealousy between the

rival portions of the city — Tenochtitlan and Tlaltelolco — was finally carried into an open quarrel by the erection, by each faction, of a new temple. It was on the occasion of their return from a victory over another tribe. Each erected a temple for the reception of the gods of the vanquished nation which they had brought with them. That of the Tlaltelolcans, called *Coaxolotl*, was finer than that of the Mexicans, called *Coatlan*, and this made much ill-feeling. Three or four years later, *Moquihuix*, the fiery king of the Tlaltelolcos, could endure no longer the constant increase in power of his near neighbor, Tenochtitlan, and planned a rebellion. His wife, sister to the now reigning king, Axajacatl, fled to her brother, complaining of her ill-treatment and betraying the plans of her husband. Moquihuix secretly assembled his soldiers, and, in order to infuse into them the highest degree of courage, made them drink of the blood of their enemies, washed from the filthy surface of the sacrificial stone. Then he and his officers made a solemn sacrifice on a mountain near the city, to gain the favor of their gods. It was all in vain, however, for the Mexicans prevailed over their neighbors and brethren, in the bloody battle that ensued, and Moquihuix was cast down from the tower of the temple, from which he was directing his troops, and slain.

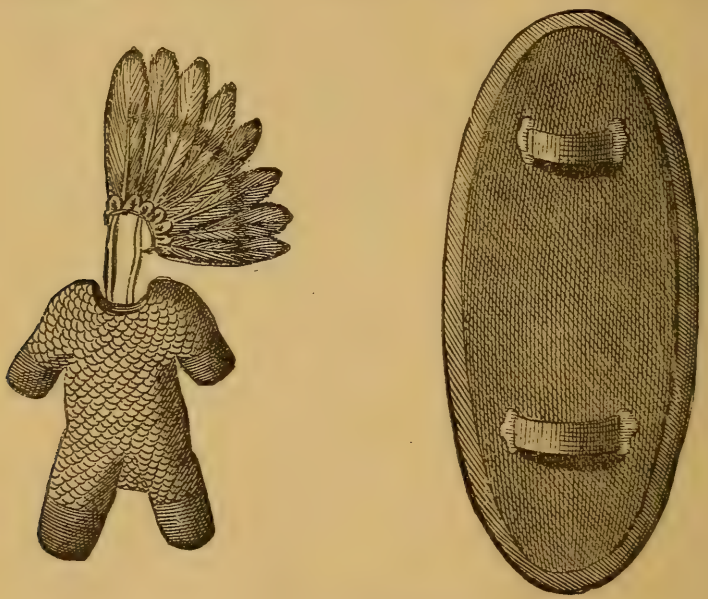
[A. D. 1473]. In this manner, the Mexicans finally became possessors of the entire city, in about the year 1473. The Tlaltelolcans were driven into the marshes, and only restored to their privileges after having been made to croak like frogs, in token of submission.

CHAPTER VII.

NEZAHUALCOYOTL, KING OF TEZCOCO.

[A. D. 1470]. In this year departed the greatest hero of that ancient Indian history, Nezahualcoyotl, King of Tezcoco. Son of a king who was murdered by the tyrant Tezozomoc, his youth was passed in constant peril from the designs that tyrant and his son entertained against his life. Possessed of extraordinary courage and endurance, he had always kept in view the exalted station it was his right to occupy, never for a moment faltering until he was at last seated upon the throne of Tezcoco. Then, instead of devoting himself to murdering and plundering his neighbors, like his cousins, the Mexicans, he gave all his energies to promote the growth and welfare of his kingdom. It needed a man of his character and ability to knit together its dismembered provinces, and firmly grasp the helm that guided it on its course. On rejecting the bloody and barbarous creed of the Mexicans, refusing to worship God through the sacrifice of his fellow-men, he showed himself to be a long way in advance of those people. By erecting to that God a temple, dedicated to the "unknown god of causes," he humbly acknowledged his inability to comprehend Him; nor was he presumptuous enough to believe that any man on earth had ever been appointed His especial agent. In this respect he ranked even in advance of the Spanish priests, who converted the Indians from a worship of their deities by main force, and caused to be exterminated those whom they

could not convert. He was tolerant in religion, thus showing a spirit almost five hundred years in advance of his time. He instituted tribunals, and ordered that no lawsuit should be prolonged over eighty days; at the expiration of that time a general assembly met in the palace, and all cases pending were at once decided upon. This shows that he had a hatred of those vultures of the law that prey upon society. The unsettled state of

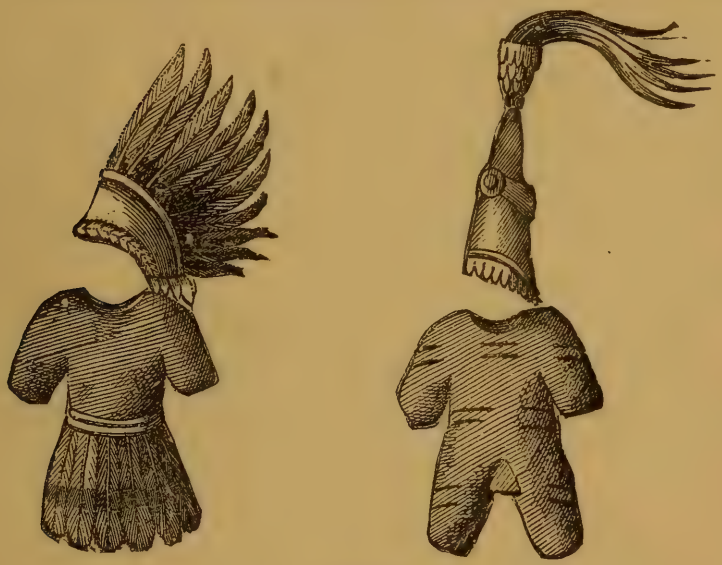


ARMOR AND SHIELD.

his kingdom called for severe laws; it makes one shudder to read of the penalties he caused to be inflicted: *death*, for drunkenness, for treason to the state, for taking anything from another's field, — even the taking of seven ears of corn was enough to incur the penalty. But to provide for travellers passing through his kingdom, he caused the highways to be sown with corn, which was free to all. Another instance of his wisdom and foresight was the preservation of his forests. He fixed limits to their

destruction, establishing boundaries beyond which no one was allowed to cut. Wishing one day to see if the law was observed, he went out in disguise, into the forest. He found a poor boy on the edge of the wood carefully gathering up a few chips some one had left. The king asked him why he did not go into the wood, where there was plenty.

"Because," answered the boy, "the king has forbidden



ARMOR.

it." His family was in great want, but though the disguised king urged him to break the law, he remained firm, preferring to suffer from want rather than to incur the penalty. Moved by this scene, the king is said to have enlarged the boundaries.

Though without books or letters, he instituted academies, where oratory, history, poetry, sculpture, and works in feathers, gold, and precious stones were greatly developed. He was himself at the head of a council of music, with the kings of Mexico and Tacuba as associates.

Music and poetry, being capable of being transmitted by ear and mouth, have lived longest. It is in his poems that this king shows his elevation of thought, and comes down to us as the exemplar of the progress of his nation on the road from savagery to civilization.

Would you like to read one of these poems, composed five hundred years ago, before the so-called discovery of America? The whole poem is too long for repetition here; let a verse or two suffice. It is said that he composed sixty hymns in honor of the Creator of Heaven. In one of his poems he lamented the fall of the tyrant Tezozomoc, whom he compared to a "large and stately tree, which had extended its roots through many countries and spread the shade of its branches over all the empire; but which at last, worm-eaten and wasted, fell to the earth, never to resume its youthful verdure."

This poem commences in this way,—

"O king, unstable and restless, when thou art dead then shall thy people be overthrown and confounded; thy place shall be no more; the Creator, the All-Powerful, shall reign."

And it ends with this delightful verse,—

"Let the joyous birds sing on and rejoice in the beauty of spring, and the butterflies enjoy the honey and perfume of the flowers, for life is as a tender plant that is plucked and withers away."

SONG OF THE KING OF TEZCOCO.

ON THE MUTABILITY OF LIFE.

"Now will I sing for a moment,
Since time and occasion offer,
And I trust to be heard with favor,
If my effort proveth deserving;
Wherefore thus I begin my singing,
Or rather my lamentation.

. . . . .

Fair Acolhuacan thou hast chosen
As thy dwelling-place and thy palace;
Thou hast set up thy royal throne there,
With thy own hand hast thou enriched it;
Wherefore it seems to be certain
That thy kingdom shall prosper and flourish.

And thou, O wise Prince Oyoyotzin,
Mighty monarch and king without equal,
Rejoice in the beauty of spring-time,
Be happy while spring abides with thee,
For the day creepeth nearer and nearer
When thou shalt seek joy and not find it.

A day when dark Fate, the destroyer,
Shall tear from thy hand the proud sceptre,
When the moon of thy glory shall lessen,
Thy pride and thy strength be diminished,
The spoil from thy servants be taken,
Thy kingdom and honor go from thee.
. . . . .

In Mexico, proudest of cities,
Reigned the mighty and brave Montezuma;
Nezahualcoyotl, the just one,
Of blest Culhuacan was the monarch;
To strong Totoquil fell the portion
Of Acatlapan, the third kingdom.
. . . . .

I would that those living in friendship,
Whom the thread of strong love doth encircle,
Could see the sharp sword of the Death-god.
For, verily, pleasure is fleeting,
All sweetness must change in the future,
The good things of life are inconstant."

This song, with others of the Tezcocan King's productions, were preserved in the memory of the "old ones," and "written in Aztec, after the Spanish conquest, when they were translated into Spanish by Ixtlilxochitl, a direct descendant of the royal poet."

To this learned writer, Ixtlilxochitl, we owe these valu-

able remains of the monarch, and to the fact that he was his descendant, doubtless, is due the *favorable picture* that is drawn of this king.

We are told that Nezahualcoyotl delighted in the study of nature, and became a fair astronomer by studying the heavens. Such plants and animals as he could not keep alive at his court he caused paintings to be made of, by skilled native artists. These were seen by a learned Spanish naturalist, after the Conquest, who declared they were true to the life.

Mention has been made of the palaces and temples this king erected, one of the former being large enough to contain several thousand people, as we shall see when we come to speak of the Conquest. That temple which he built in honor of the unknown God, was a high tower, consisting of nine stories, the last one dark and with vaulted roof, painted blue within, and with cornices of gold. Plates of fine metal were hung here, which it was the duty of watchmen to strike at intervals, when the king would fall on his knees in prayer.

"The elevated genius of this king," says the historian* whose account we have been mainly following, "actuated by the great love he had to his people, produced so enlightened a capital that in future times it was considered as the nursery of the arts and the centre of cultivation. Tezcoco was the city where the Mexican language was spoken in the greatest purity and perfection, where the best artists were found, and where poets, orators, and historians abounded. The Mexicans and many others adopted their laws; and, if we may be allowed the application, Tezcoco was the *Athens* and Nezahualcoyotl the *Solon* of Anahuac."

* The learned Jesuit, Clavigero.

Contrast this pleasing picture of this centre of culture and refinement with that of the city in the lake, Tenochtitlan, hot with the lust for blood that poured in streams from its reeking altars.

In many respects Nezahualcoyotl reminds us of King David, mentioned in the Bible; he seems to have had similar talents to, as well as the vices of, that noted monarch. We may trace the likeness even to the similar manner in which each possessed himself of his wife, the mother of his favorite son. The Tezcocan King became enamored of the wife of *Temictzin*, a brave Tlaltelolcan general, and he sent him to the wars, instructing his generals to put him in the front ranks, and when he was surrounded by his enemies to retreat and leave him. This they did, and he was killed; and after waiting awhile, for decency's sake, Nezahualcoyotl married the wife of the man he had murdered, and by her he had *Nezahualpilli*, his only legitimate son and heir.

The remains of some of the works of the departed emperor still exist, near Tezcoco, in the limits of the city that yet bears its name. A few miles distant from the ancient city are the ruins of *Tezcosingo*, the pleasure retreat of Nezahualcoyotl and his son. There is there a reservoir hollowed from solid rock, near which is a stone bench or seat, and into which a pipe once conducted water from an aqueduct. This is called "Montezuma's Bath," though it undoubtedly was the work of the Tezcocan King. Near this is a great embankment, nearly two hundred feet high, on the top of which are pipes for conducting water. This aqueduct lies between and connects two hills, and all these remains are in a most charming, secluded vale, lying among the hills overlooking the vale of Tezcoco, the great lake, and the Aztec city.

A visitor to Tezcoco may find many remains of the

former greatness of this "Athens of Anahuac," if he search diligently. The ruins of three great pyramids are still pointed out, and from one of them, no longer ago than last year (1881), was dug a large, sculptured slab, which was thought to be a portion of a Tezcocan calendar stone.



MONTEZUMA'S BATH.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEXICO IN HER GLORY.

[A.D. 1474.] AXAJACATL, the sixth king of Mexico, was animated by the same desires for conquest as his predecessors. He invaded the kingdom of Michoacan, and subjected several provinces lying on its borders. He was repulsed with great slaughter of his troops from the capital of Michoacan, called *Tzintzuntzan*, and in one of the engagements about this time was severely wounded. The fine valley of Toluca, and much other territory lying west of Mexico, was annexed to his kingdom; and he had the pleasure of sacrificing a great number of prisoners, including the two brave captains who had caused him his wound.

[A.D. 1477.] At last he died, just after his return one day from Chapultepec, where he had been for recreation. On the face of a cliff, that supports the present castle of Chapultepec, was carved an image of this monarch, and also one of that still greater warrior, Montezuma I. He had been out to examine these sculptures on the day of his death. The king was a great lover of the Aztec games, and especially that of ball-playing. He once compelled the lord of the *Xochimilcas* to engage with him in a contest of this kind, wagering the revenues of the city of Mexico for a year against the freedom of the Xochimilcas. He was beaten by his adversary; but in order to avoid paying the forfeit he caused him to be strangled, by means of a wreath of flowers in which was hidden a noose.

[A. D. 1482.] Tizoc was the name of the seventh king of Mexico, a grave and serious man, who did not seem to be barbarous enough for his subjects, since he was murdered in 1482, after reigning but five years. He collected a vast amount of material for the building of a temple to their great war god, that should surpass all others, but died without carrying out his design.

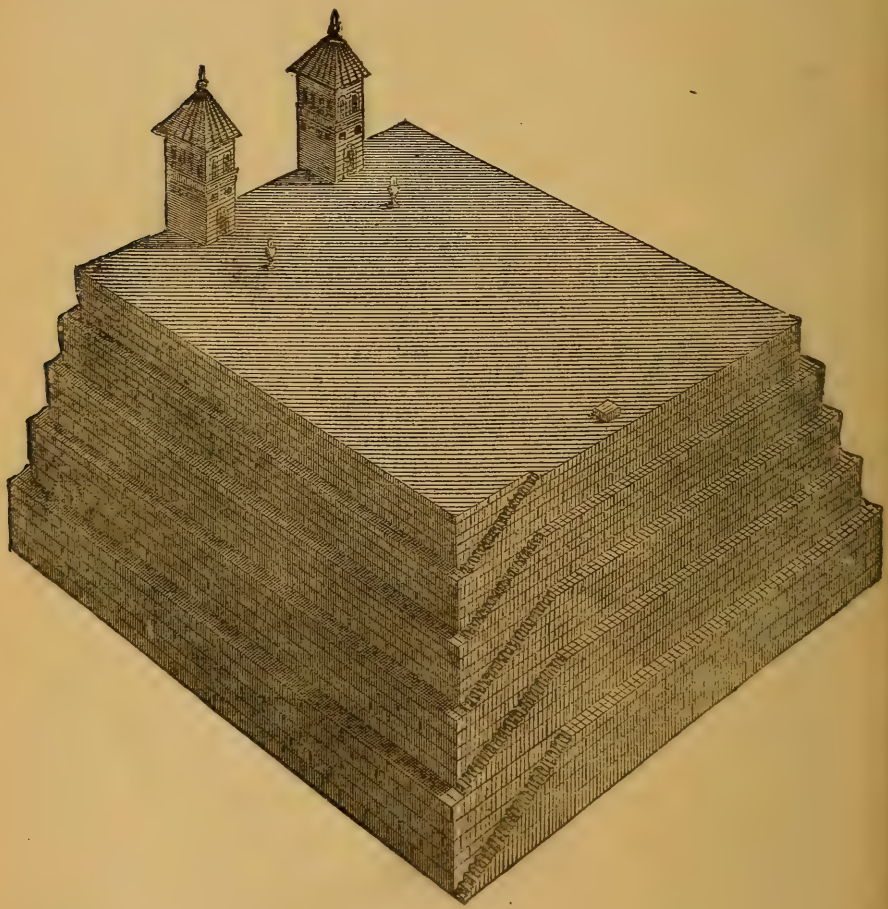
The son of the last king of Tezcoco was now about twenty years old, having been but eight at his father's death. He experienced much opposition from his brothers, when he had taken possession of the throne, who considered themselves entitled to some recognition. They were a great deal older than Nezahualpilli, and could not endure the thought of being reigned over by one so young. So they excited a rebellion. And here the meaner traits of Nezahualcoyotl showed themselves strongly in the son. Even as his father had caused the death of a brave captain, to gratify his lust, so did Nezahualpilli destroy one of his most valiant officers to save his own miserable life. The enemy had found out what armor the king would wear, and the rebel general had directed his men to seek out and capture or kill the wearer of this armor. Hearing this, Nezahualpilli made one of his officers *change garments with him;* and after that unfortunate soldier had been set upon and killed, and while his foes were chanting songs of victory, he came up with his men and utterly routed them. In the eyes of men, this may have seemed perfectly justifiable; but in the sight of Him who considers all life sacred, and does not recognize the petty distinctions among men, it could not have been considered else than *murder.* If Nezahualcoyotl was the David of this history, his son, Nezahualpilli, was also the Solomon. Born, as was Solomon, of a woman whose husband his father had murdered, he seems to have striven to emulate him in the number of his wives.

After the rebellion had been quelled he turned his attention to the building of a new palace, of granaries, and the laying-out of magnificent gardens. He caused to be enclosed by a great wall "exactly as much ground as was occupied by the rebels, when they came to the defence of their general, and gave the place the name of that day on which he had obtained the victory." Perhaps that noble grove of cypresses, called at this day "*El Bosque del Contador*," — giant trees set out in double rows, and enclosing a great space, — is a monument to this very achievement.

Though the King of Tezcoco had many wives, he had no legitimate queen, and so he demanded and obtained a grand-daughter of King Tizoc. Now this lady had a beautiful sister whom she loved so much that she did not wish to be separated from her. And when Nezahualpilli saw how lovely she was, he loved her also, and did not want to be separated from her. The easiest way to settle the difficulty, in his mind, was to *marry them both*, and this he did; for one queen more or less mattered not to Nezahualpilli. His first queen was the mother of *Cacamatzin*, who succeeded his father to the throne; the second was mother of three other sons, two of whom will figure conspicuously in the period of the Spanish Conquest. We shall see then how the sins of these two monarchs were visited upon their sons, and were instrumental in causing the destruction of their people.

[A. D. 1486.] The Mexicans had chosen *Ahuitzotl* as their eighth king, at the death of Tizoc, brother of their two previous monarchs. For four years, this fiend devoted himself to war and the accumulation of victims for a sacrifice without a parallel in history. At the end of this time the great temple was finished, from the material gathered by King Tizoc, and by the aid of an incredible number of

workmen. Such a temple was called by the Aztecs a *Teocalli* * — or holy pyramid. The first ones, constructed at different periods, had been of wood; but this one fin-



TEOCALLI.

ished by King Ahuitzotl, in 1486, was of stone — a great pyramid of earth faced with cut stone, one hundred and twenty feet high. Two altars were erected upon the

* Teocalli, or Teopan, literally "House of God."

flat surface of the pyramid, the tops of their cupolas being one hundred and seventy feet above the pavement of the great square in which the temple was erected.* The pyramid was built in five stages, or stories, and steps led up to each in such a manner that the whole structure must be encircled before the ascent could be made from one to the other.

When he had completed the temple, and had placed the god of war, the terrible Huitzilopochtli, in position in one of the adoratories on the summit, Ahuitzotl invited the two allied monarchs to be present at the dedication. He also extended invitations to all persons of distinction within the valley. Even people at war with the Mexicans came to witness the ceremonies, and were assigned seats where they could have an unobstructed view. This terrible feast of blood lasted four days, in which time were sacrificed all the prisoners they had made in the past four years. Were it not that all historians agree in estimating the number sacrificed as enormous, we could not believe that human beings were capable of such a wholesale slaughter of unarmed men. *Sixty thousand prisoners* were sacrificed during the four days of this festival! The demon who presided at the feast, in the person of King Ahuitzotl, commenced the work of blood with his own hands, and then the priests took it up, each continuing the slaughter until he was exhausted, when his place was filled by another. Sixty thousand is the lowest number estimated, and some historians say seventy thousand, were murdered on that day. All are agreed that the prisoners were arranged "in two long files, each a mile and a half in length, which began in the roads of Tacuba and Iztapalapan, and terminated at the temple, where, as soon as the victims arrived, they were sacrificed."

* These are the dimensions given by Humboldt.

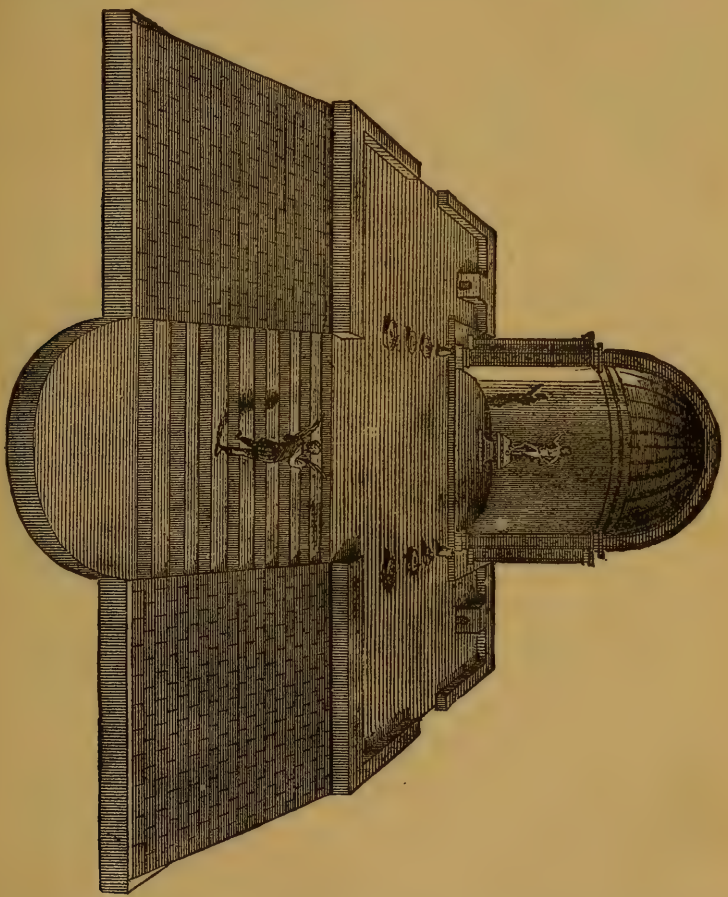
It is said by some writers that six millions of people witnessed this ceremony. To all the principal personages Ahuitzotl gave rich presents, intending, no doubt, that this dedication of the great temple should live in the memory of the Indians forever. This cruel and vindictive monarch lived long after this, and the historian regrets that no signal calamity befel him or the nation to show the displeasure of the God whom they had thus offended by such a display of their hellish passions. Such a terrible reputation did this king create for himself that in Mexico, to this day, the people characterize a ferocious villain by his name: *es un Ahuitzotl*, — "he is an Ahuitzotl."

[A. D. 1496.] War succeeded war, for this destroyer of men was never satisfied. We are happy to chronicle reverses as well as victories in the invasions of the Mexicans. At one time they marched into the valley of the Atliscas, who, wholly unprepared, sent for a brave chief of the *Hueotzincas*, named *Toltecatl*, to assist them. Toltecatl was at a game of ball when the embassadors arrived asking assistance. He at once organized a band of troops, rushed upon the Mexicans, unarmed, slew the first one with his fist, and committed such slaughter that the invaders retreated to their own valley. On account of his bravery his people made him chief of their republic, but he was subsequently driven out by the priests, who were plotting against law and order, and finally murdered, and his body sent to the Mexicans.

In 1489, had died Chimalpopoca, King of Tacuba, who had succeeded the first king of that province of Tlacopan. This small kingdom had taken little part in the wars, except to furnish such troops as were required by her ally, and collect the tribute.

[A. D. 1498.] The close of the fifteenth century found this atrocious villain, King Ahuitzotl, still in power. In

1498, finding that Lake Tezcoco was growing shallow, he undertook to replenish it by diverting into it the waters of a spring in the mountains. The city of *Cohoacan* was already supplied by this spring, and the lord of that city



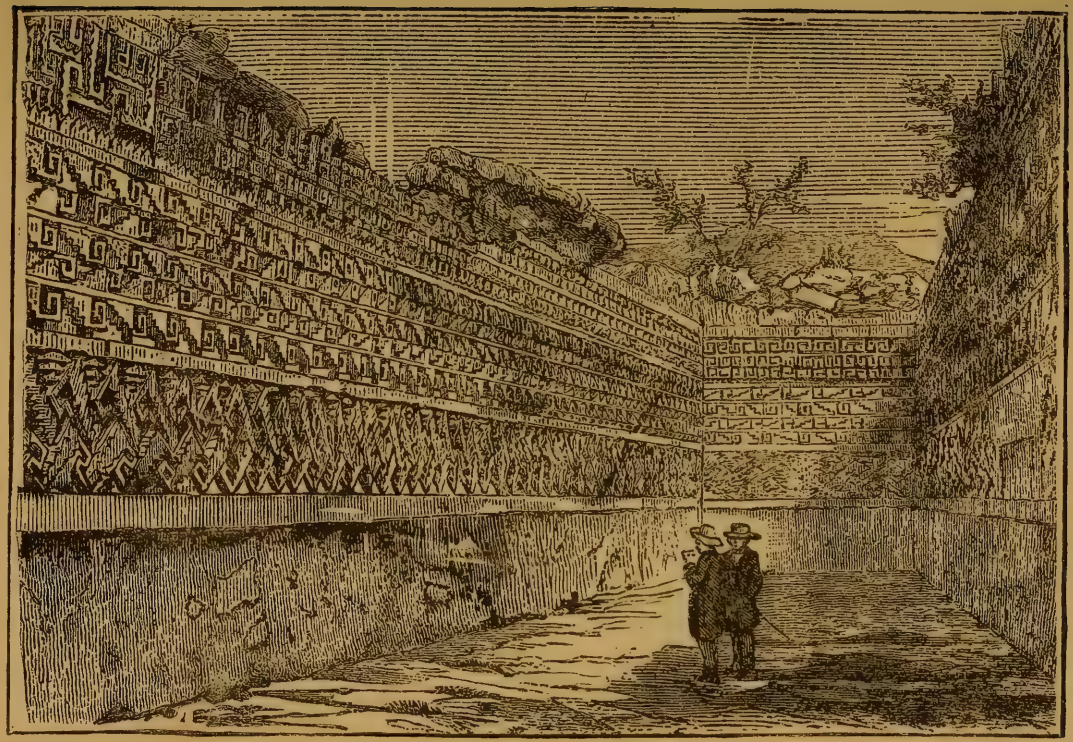
ANOTHER FORM OF TEMPLE.

was commanded to assist in conducting it to the city of Mexico.

This lord represented to Ahuitzotl that the attempt would be dangerous to the safety of the city, as at times the fountain overflowed its banks, and if it were diverted into the valley in a stream it might cause great damage to

be done. At this, the tyrant, believing the lord of Cohoacan had other motives for wishing to keep the water from him, ordered him to be murdered. A great aqueduct was constructed and the water finally received with rejoicing, the priests sacrificing birds and offering incense to the god of waters. That very year was the murdered lord avenged, for the waters rose so high as to inundate the city; and King Ahuitzotl himself, being caught by the flood in one of the lower rooms of his palace, received such a blow on his head, in getting out, as caused his death a few years later. He was obliged to call upon the King of Tezcoco to aid him in arresting the flood; the old dike was repaired, and the same priests that offered incense and sacrifices to the god of waters for the gift of the fountain, defiled the spring with their offerings in their vain attempts to make him take it back.

As kings went, in that barbaric age, old King Ahuitzotl was a very fair specimen of the whole. There was not one of them that we can recall that did not merit the punishment the Spaniards meted out to their descendants. Making every allowance for the ignorance of the age in which they lived, they were yet willfully, wofully perverse. They allowed themselves to be led by the priests, whose appetite for blood was never satisfied. And we shall see, that the nearer the rulers came to the priestly influence the more cruel they became. If you will look back through the vista afforded by this dark record, you will not fail to perceive how the priests had been preparing a structure, composed of the bones and cemented by the blood of their victims, that was to fall upon and crush its builders out of existence! Mexican progress began when Tenochtitlan was founded, in 1325; its glory culminated at the dedication of the temple, in 1486, during the reign of Ahuitzotl.



GRAND CHAMBER, MITLA.

[A.D. 1500]. The Mexicans swept their armies southward, as far as Guatemala, nearly nine hundred miles distant. An Aztec army of 60,000 men cleared the country of the Miztecs and Zapotecs as far as the sacred city of Mitla, where was the burial-place of the Zapotec kings, and sent its priests to be sacrificed on the altar of Mexico. There was one Zapotec king whom they could not defeat, *Cocioyeza*, who fortified a great plateau, defended by ravines and barrancas, and twice defeated the Mexican armies sent against him. The King of Mexico was glad to conclude a peace with him, and he also gave him one of the royal princesses in marriage. In fact, the Zapotecan king fell in love with this princess, a sister of Montezuma, *before he saw her*, for she appeared to him in a vision as he was taking his bath, and after exhibiting to him a peculiar mark on her hand, disappeared, saying she would return when sent for. When he sent his officers to select a queen for him from the Mexican court, he instructed them to look for the beautiful princess with the peculiar mark in the palm of her hand. At the court, they noticed one of the beauteous damsels frequently raising her hand to arrange her hair, so as to expose the palm of her hand. Of course, she was the one the Zapotec had seen in the vision, and, of course, they were married and lived happily together. King Montezuma, her brother, when he came to the throne, tried to persuade her to poison her husband, — after the fashion of that dark period, — but she refused, thinking, very wisely, that a royal spouse alive was worth more to her than one dead, and a royal brother into the bargain!

It is a pleasure, at last, to be able to chronicle the death of that wicked old monarch, Ahuitzotl, who departed, full of honors and much lamented, to his fathers. He left

Mexico a more magnificent city than when he found it. He had built temples and palaces, and had pushed her to the pinnacle of her power; but he had also sown the seeds of distrust and terror that were to cause her to dissolve before her enemies like the mist about a mountain-top.



MEXICAN URN.

CHAPTER IX.

LAST YEARS OF THE MEXICAN EMPIRE.

[A.D. 1502.] In the year 1490, in one of the expeditions to the Gulf coast, there came into prominence, through his display of valor, one of the royal princes named *Montezuma.* He was a son of the famous and terrible Axajacatl, and had been in many campaigns, though his warlike father had died before he was old enough to accompany him far. By the law of the kingdom, the throne vacated by the death of Ahuitzotl should descend to one of the grandsons of the preceding king. The choice fell upon Montezuma, called *Xocojotzin* — to distinguish him from the great Montezuma who died in the year 1464. He was *not* a son of the first Montezuma, but of his brother, Axajacatl, who had succeeded him to the throne. He had shown great bravery as a general, but of late had joined the priesthood, preferring to sacrifice his victims on the altar of the war-god to slaying them in the heat of battle.

When the news of his election reached him he was found sweeping the temple, to which occupation he returned, with great affectation of humility, as soon as he had been confirmed in his exalted position.

It is said that the great Nezahualpilli made a noted speech on the occasion of his coronation, congratulating him upon having such an empire to govern, and the people upon having such a king to preside over their destinies. But this address of Nezahualpilli (like those of men like him who have retired from business and spend their time

in domineering over their wives) is too long for repetition. Montezuma II. — for this was now his title — was much affected by this speech; but whatever good resolutions he may have formed did not prevent him from hurrying off to secure some wretched captives to be murdered at the subsequent ceremonies.

A convenient quarrel was opened with a neighboring tribe, and a sufficient number of unfortunates dragged from their homes to be slaughtered on this occasion. The games, dances and illuminations were so varied, the value of the tributes paid by different provinces was so great, that visitors came from all over the country — even the fierce *Tlascallans*, between whom and the Mexicans existed perpetual enmity. To all these were assigned choice seats, — as at the dedication of the temple, in 1486, — and all departed greatly impressed with the magnificence of Montezuma's court. The rejoicings of his subjects were, however, of short duration, for the veil of humility was soon drawn aside, and Montezuma showed himself the proud, arrogant, and oppressive ruler that his subsequent acts proved him really to be.

Disregarding the advice of his counselors, Montezuma pursued a course directly opposite to that of his predecessors. They had been accustomed to bestow rewards for valor upon deserving men, without regard to rank or birth, and in this manner many plebeians had attained to high office. Montezuma degraded these officials, and surrounded himself only with the nobility. As had been predicted, this conduct soon alienated the hearts of the people; though he made them fear him, they at the same time hated him. His attendants in the palace were all persons of rank; several hundred noble young men especially waited upon him at dinner. Every morning, he gave audience to six hundred nobles and lords of tributary



MONTEZUMA XOCOJOTZIN.

provinces, whose retinues were so numerous that they filled three small courts of the palace. All these rulers over distant dependencies were obliged to reside several months of each year at court, or leave some near relatives as hostages for their fidelity in case of absence. When they appeared before the king they wore only the coarsest garments, laying off their rich robes in an outer apartment. As they approached the king they made three bows, saying at the first, "lord," at the second, "my lord," and at the third, "great lord." They replied to his questions in a low tone and humble manner, and soon retreated from the room, always with their faces to the throne.

In a future chapter we shall describe his palace and the state and ceremonies there, as observed by the Spanish conquerors on their arrival at the Aztec capital. Our object now is to inquire into the causes that contributed to the subsequent destruction of the empire, and to trace the succession of events up to the year 1520.

This ninth King of Mexico, Montezuma, committed a fatal error in separating from him the common people, who constituted the mass of his fighting men, and surrounding himself only with persons of nobility and members of the priesthood. He was digging the ground from under his own feet; the glittering fabric he was rearing was top-heavy, and would have been precipitated to the ground of its own weight, even had not the Spaniards appeared to hasten its downfall! He even carried his arrogance so far as to deprive the travelling merchants of all the privileges they had enjoyed under previous monarchs. Now, these travelling merchants, as we have seen in a previous chapter, were important aids in the extension of the Aztec dominion. They entered the country of an enemy, or one not subjected to Mexican rule, in the character of merchants, but really performed efficient work as spies. They

had almost invariably been advance couriers, who had preceded the coming of an army of subjugation. Under one of the kings, a party of these merchants had been cut off in the country of the Miztecas, and there they seized a town and fortifications and held out for *four years*, until relieved by the approach of a Mexican army.

All these valuable spies and skirmishers, who traversed the country at their own expense and added vastly to its material wealth, were degraded to the ranks of the plebeians, without hope of elevation. His armies were constantly employed in quelling revolts, but they succeeded in adding little new territory.

The arrogance and severity of Montezuma, while they disgusted his subjects and caused them to desire nothing so much as a change of government, were somewhat modified by his liberal spirit on great occasions and his generosity towards deserving officials. By keeping his subjects employed he smothered discontent, and by building temples and keeping the altars smoking with sacrifice, he gained a reputation for devoutness and devotedness to their gods.

[A. D. 1503.] Within sixty miles of the Mexican capital there existed the republic of *Tlascala*, small but warlike, a thorn in the side of the Aztecs, a perpetual menace to them. No one knows why this belligerent people had been allowed to exist so long near the centre of Mexican power, when — notwithstanding their bravery — the Aztecs could doubtless have crushed them by mere weight of numbers. Some have thought that they were allowed to remain there in order that the Mexican troops might have an enemy near to be exercised against, and a place whence they might draw victims for the altars without fatiguing marches to distant provinces.

At all events, the brave little republic sat intrenched



SACRIFICE TO THE GODS.

among the mountains of Tlascala, and had never been subjugated since the entrance of its people into the Mexican valley. Montezuma at last resolved to severely punish these people, if not to conquer them, and sent against them an army commanded by his son. This army was defeated, and his first-born and much-beloved was slain. A second army sent against the Tlascalans was also vanquished, and these victories the heroes celebrated with great rejoicings.

There was in Tlascala a famous general called *Tlahuicol*, celebrated for his great strength and courage, and for his skill with the *maquahuitl*, or the Mexican sword, the one he carried being so heavy that an ordinary man could hardly lift it. By some mischance he got embedded in a marsh, and his enemies, who had hitherto fled in terror wherever he appeared, captured and placed him in a cage and sent him to Montezuma.

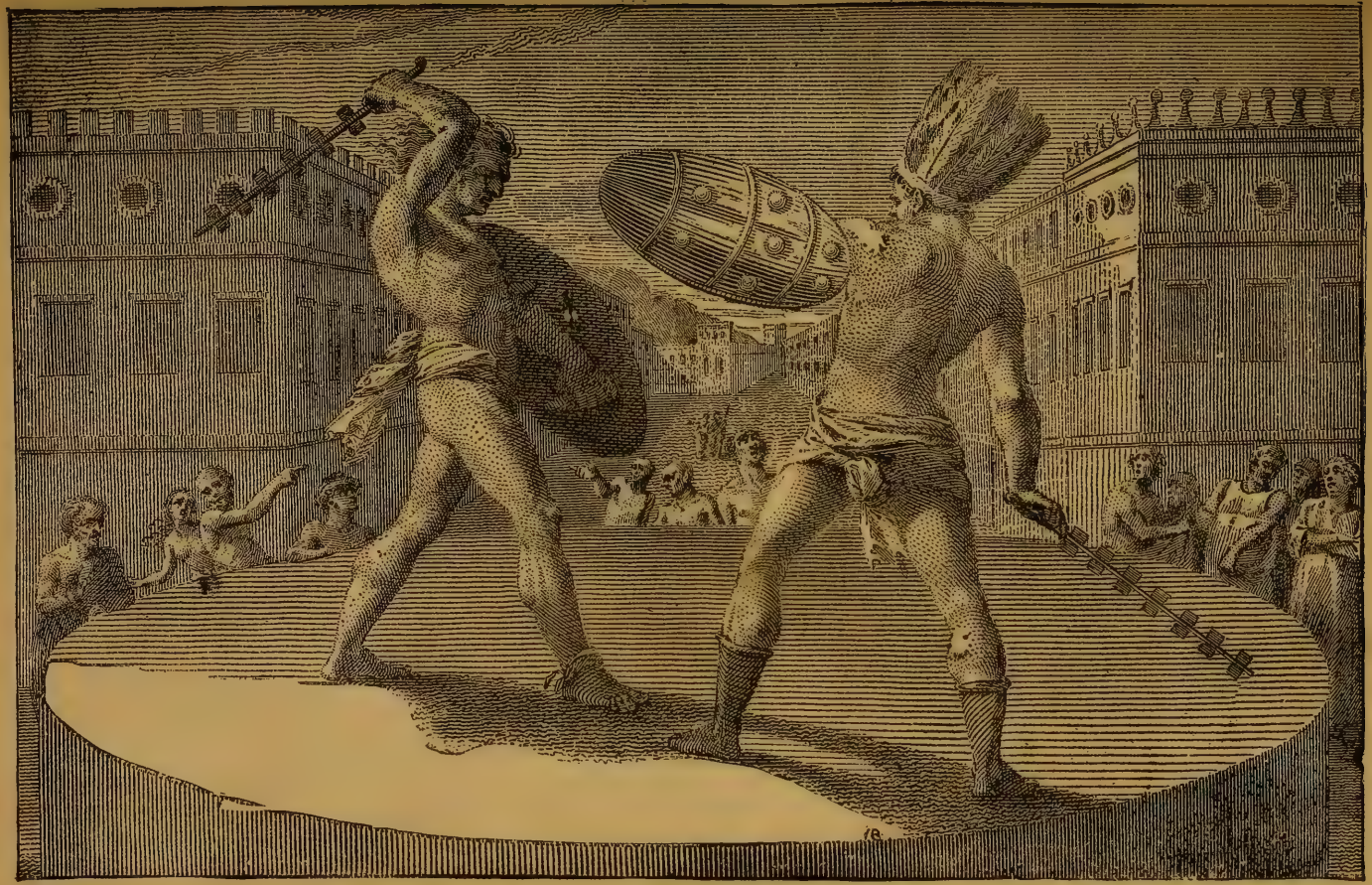
The generous nature of the king impelled him to set the hero at liberty: but Tlahuicol refused to return to Tlascala after having suffered the disgrace of being taken a prisoner, and demanded permission to die in honor of the god. Montezuma offered him the command of his armies, as general-in-chief, but the noble-minded Tlascallan refused, saying he would not be guilty of such treason to his country. He, however, accepted a command of a body of troops against Michoacan, enemies to both nations, and acquitted himself so bravely that Montezuma renewed his offers of reward and liberty. This great man would accept neither, but steadily persisted in being allowed to die before the god. At last, after having dwelt with the Mexicans for three years, his request was granted.

There were two kinds of sacrifice, one performed by the priests, in which the victim was stretched upon the convex surface of the great sacrificial stone, his hands and legs

held by four attendants, while the chief priest cut open the protruding breast and tore out the yet palpitating heart. This was offered to the god, either by being thrust between his lips in a golden spoon, or roasted on the coals before him, and the body was thrown down the steps of the great temple-pyramid to the people assembled below. This ceremony took place on the summit of the great *teocalli.*

The other mode of sacrifice was the *gladiatorial.* Near the middle of the vast square of the temple was a low, broad stone, upon which, tied by one foot to a ring in its centre, any prisoner who had gained a reputation for bravery was allowed to battle for his liberty. Should he vanquish six Aztec warriors in succession he was allowed to go free. Fettered in this way, the valiant *Tlahuicol* killed eight of Mexico's bravest warriors and wounded twenty, when, falling senseless from a fearful blow on the head, he was taken before the idol, Huitzilopochtli, and his heart torn out, as a precious morsel for the god.

[A. D. 1505.] Two years of famine reduced the people to such a condition that the king was obliged to throw open the royal granaries, and even to allow them to wander away into other countries to seek for food. In 1505, an expedition was undertaken to Guatemala, nearly nine hundred miles distant, and a temple was erected to the goddess *Centiotl,* — the goddess of Maize, — and consecrated by sacrifice of the prisoners taken in this year. A bad omen for them, at this time, was the burning of the turret of another temple, which was struck by lightning. The people of Tlaltelolco seeing the fire, and thinking an enemy had got possession, hurried into the Mexican portion of the city with arms in their hands. This act was construed by Montezuma as rebellious, and he deprived them of all offices and looked upon them distrustfully till his wrath was spent.



A GLADIATORIAL SACRIFICE.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE NEW FIRE.

[A. D. 1506.] At the end of this year occurred the ceremonial of "tying up the cycle," or the festivities attending the close of one of their cycles and the beginning of another. You must know that the Mexicans divided the duration of the world into four *ages*. The first they called the age of water — *Atonatiuh*, or "first age of the sun," — which lasted from the creation of the world until the destruction of mankind in the great flood. The second — *Tlaltonatiuh* — the "age of earth," was that period when giants dwelt here, and was concluded by terrible earthquakes. The third age — that of air — *Ehècatonatiuh*, ended in great whirlwinds, in which everything perished along with the third sun. The fourth, the "age of fire" — *Tletonatiuh* — was to be the last; it began with the restoration of the human race, and, according to their mythology, was to end with the fourth sun. It was owing to this superstition that the closing years of their cycle were full of anxiety; they regarded every omen in the sky, they were never free from the fear that the god of fire would devour them at the termination of every cycle.

This century, or cycle, contained fifty-two years, divided into four periods of thirteen years each. Two of these centuries made up an "old century" — *Huehuetiliztli* — of one hundred and four years. Their years had four names only, they were: *Tochtli*, the Rabbit; *Acatl*, the Cane, or Reed; *Tecpatl*, Flint; *Calli*, House. The first year of the century was (1) *Tochtli;* the second (2) *Acatl;* the third (3) *Tecpatl;* the fourth (4) *Calli;* while the fifth was (5) *Tochtli;* and so on to the thirteenth year, which ended with *Tochtli*. The second *period*, of course, began with *Acatl*, the third with *Tecpatl*, the fourth with *Calli*. By this ingenious arrangement there was no repetition of

the symbols and their corresponding numbers and no confounding of the years one with the other. Now, as a century was completed, they called the end of it by a name, *Toxiuhmolpia* — signifying the "tying-together-of-the-years," because at this time the two centuries were united to form an age. On the last night of the century, terror and anxiety prevented every one from sleeping, even had it been allowed by the laws. All the fires were extinguished, both in temples and houses, and all articles for domestic use, especially earthenware and kitchen utensils, were broken and destroyed. Some hours before midnight "the priests, clothed in various dresses and insignias of their gods, and accompanied by a vast crowd of people, issued from the temple out of the city, directing their way towards a mountain — *Huixachtla* — near the city of Iztapalapan, a little more than six miles from the capital. They regulated their journey in some measure by observation of the stars, in order that they might arrive at the mountain a little before midnight, on the top of which the new fire was to be kindled. In the meantime, the people remained in the utmost suspense and solicitude, hoping, on the one hand, to find from the new fire a new century granted to mankind, and fearing, on the other hand, the total destruction of mankind if the fire by divine interference should not be permitted to kindle." The faces of the children were covered, and they were not allowed to sleep, to prevent their being *transformed into mice.* All those who did not go out with the priests mounted upon roofs and terraces to observe from thence the event of the ceremony.

Upon the breast of the human victim selected for this event were placed two pieces of wood, and as one of the priests gave him the fatal stab with the knife of flint another kindled the wooden shield by friction, and the flame flew upwards. Then the victim and the blazing

wood were cast into a pile of combustibles, and as the flames leaped up they were received by the assembled multitudes with shouts of gladness. The signal fire in the mountain top was seen all over the valley. "Myriads of upturned faces greeted it from hills, mountains, terraces, temples, teocallis, house-tops and city-walls; and the prostrate mul-



MEXICAN CENTURY.

titudes hailed the emblem of light, life, and fruition as a blessed omen of the restored favor of their gods and the preservation of the race for another cycle. The priests carried the new fire to the temple, and in every temple and dwelling it was rekindled from the sacred source; and when the sun rose again on the following morning, the solemn procession of priests, princes and subjects, which

had taken up its march from the capital on the preceding night, with solemn steps, returned once more to the city, and, restoring the gods to their altars, abandoned themselves to joy and festivity, in token of gratitude and relief from impending doom."

This was the *last* celebration of the festival of the sacred fire in *Aztlan*. Nearly eight cycles have rolled their rounds of years since then, but at the termination of none of them has been performed the ceremony of the "tying up of years." At that last rejoicing, in 1506, they felt themselves safe for another century; but, as a nation, they were to be swept from the earth. The *age of fire*, indeed, this proved for them, for their fair land was to be swept by fire and sword; the victims they had sacrificed were to be amply avenged!

CHAPTER X.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

[A. D. 1507.] A strange campaign was undertaken by the Aztec Emperor, in 1506, against the Lord of *Malinalli*, in the Miztec country. It seems that this lord had in his possession a very precious plant,—and it must have been very precious to have had such a long name,—called the *tlapalizqui-xochitl*, that is, the "red flower." He refused to give up to Montezuma this *tlapalizqui-xochitl*, and so that emperor sent for it, and got it; and also numerous captives, who were sacrificed at the dedication of the *Tzompantli*, or place of skulls, and at the festival of the tying-up-of-the-cycle.

At the very beginning of the new cycle occurred an eclipse; this was followed by an earthquake; seventeen hundred soldiers were drowned in the Miztec country; the inhabitants of Anahuac were terrified at these manifestations of divine displeasure. "With the new cycle began a period during which, down to the appearance of the Spaniards at Vera Cruz, every event was invested with a mysterious significance. . . . An army, sent to the province of Amatlan, perished with cold, and by falling trees and rocks; a comet with three heads hung in the sky above Anahuac; a great pyramid of fire was visible for forty days in the east, reaching from the earth to the sky." It was only too evident to Montezuma and the allied kings, as well as to their people, that great disasters were impend-

ing. It is not unlikely that unusual importance was given to these mysterious events, owing to the arrival of Europeans on the coast of Central America. Can we doubt that the obedient subjects of Montezuma had failed to inform him of the arrival of Columbus on the coast of Honduras in 1502? Four years later his army had invaded Guatemala. When they later returned, with prisoners for the priests, did they not report, what they could not have failed to have heard from the Guatemala Indians, that a white man's vessel had touched their shore and bartered with the natives? In 1506 De Solis and Pinzon, Spanish navigators, had coasted the eastern shore of Yucatan. Is it possible that Montezuma should not have heard of one of these arrivals? At the opening of the sixteenth century, when these omens first began to agitate the minds of the Mexicans, the islands of the Caribbean Sea had been ten years visited by Europeans. The currents of that sea set up directly against the eastern coast of Yucatan and Mexico from the southernmost of these islands. Is it not probable that some article belonging to the white strangers should have been washed upon these shores? One of the early historians, *Herrera*, says that the king had in his possession "a box containing wearing apparel, and a sword of a style unknown to the natives."

The appearance of the comet terrified them exceedingly; the superstitious Montezuma consulted his astrologers, but they could give him no satisfactory explanation. Then he applied to Nezahualpilli, King of Tezcoco, who, of late years, had given so much attention to the study of astronomy and astrology. Between the two monarchs a coldness had existed for some years, owing to the public execution, by Nezahualpilli, of one of his wives, a sister of Montezuma, and of a son, for whose life the Mexican king had interceded in vain. But in this extremity the disasters



which threatened, seeming not to be confined to one nation, but to be universal, the kings were reunited. Nezahualpilli, being invited to Mexico, and there put in possession of all the facts, concluded "that the comet predicted the future disasters of those kingdoms by the arrival of a new people." Montezuma did not relish this interpretation, and they agreed to settle it by a *game of foot-ball* between themselves. As Nezahualpilli came off victorious, it seemed conclusive that his interpretation was the correct one; but still Montezuma was not satisfied. He resolved to consult a famous astrologer of his own kingdom, who was justly considered as an oracle. Much to the chagrin of the monarch this diviner confirmed the prediction of the King of Tezcoco, and Montezuma, in a great rage, caused his house to be pulled to pieces and tumbled about his ears. No doubt he would have liked to serve Nezahualpilli in the same manner, but he dared not; he retired to his palace in disgust, and filled with apprehension.

[A. D. 1509.] Some of the Spanish historians speak of an occurrence that happened at this time in confirmation of these gloomy predictions. In the year 1509, *Papantzin*, a Mexican princess, a sister to Montezuma, died, apparently, and was buried with great honors in a cavern in the garden where she was wont to go to bathe in a fountain. It seems, however, that she was merely in a trance, and when she recovered she groped her way out of the cave and sent for her relatives, Montezuma and Nezahualpilli, declaring she had a message of great importance to communicate. When they had arrived, and had convinced themselves that it was truly Papantzin, sister of Montezuma, whom they had buried a few days before, they sat down and listened to her story. She said that after the trance had seized her, she found herself wandering upon an extensive plain. "In the middle of it I observed a road, which I afterwards

saw was divided into a variety of paths, and on one side ran a great river, whose waters made a frightful noise. As I was going to throw myself into the river, to swim to the opposite bank, I saw before me a beautiful youth, clothed in a long habit, white as snow and dazzling like the sun, with wings of beautiful feathers, and the mark of the *cross* upon his forehead. He laid hold of my hand and said to me, 'Stop, for it is not yet time to pass this river.' He then led me along by the river-side, upon the borders of which I saw a great number of human skulls and bones, and heard most lamentable groans, that waked my utmost pity. Turning my eyes towards the river I saw some large vessels upon it, filled with men of a complexion and dress quite different from ours. They were fair and bearded, and carried standards in their hands and helmets on their heads. The youth then said to me, 'It is the will of God that thou shalt live to be a witness of the revolutions which are to happen to these kingdoms. The groans which thou hast heard among these bones are from the souls of your ancestors, which are ever and will be tormented for their crimes. The men whom you see coming in these vessels are those who by their arms will make themselves masters of all these kingdoms, and with them will be introduced the knowledge of the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth. As soon as the war shall be at an end, and the means made known by which sins shall be washed away, be thou the first to receive it, and guide by thy example the natives of thy country.' Having spoken this, the youth disappeared, and I found myself recalled to life."

It is said, that Montezuma was so shocked by this melancholy prediction of the downfall of his empire that he immediately retired to one of his palaces devoted to occasions of grief, and refused ever after to see his sister. It is also related that she was the first, in the year 1524, to

receive baptism from the Spanish priests, and was called Doña Maria Papantzin. There is nothing to cause us to doubt the occurrence of the other signs and events related, but there is every evidence in this tradition of the work of the priests. It is a very pretty fable which they used to relate, in those years following the conquest, to induce the unsuspicious Indians to turn from their old religion and embrace the new.

Though visibly affected by these prognostics of coming woe, Montezuma continued to urge war, relentless war, against tribes yet unconquered by Mexico.

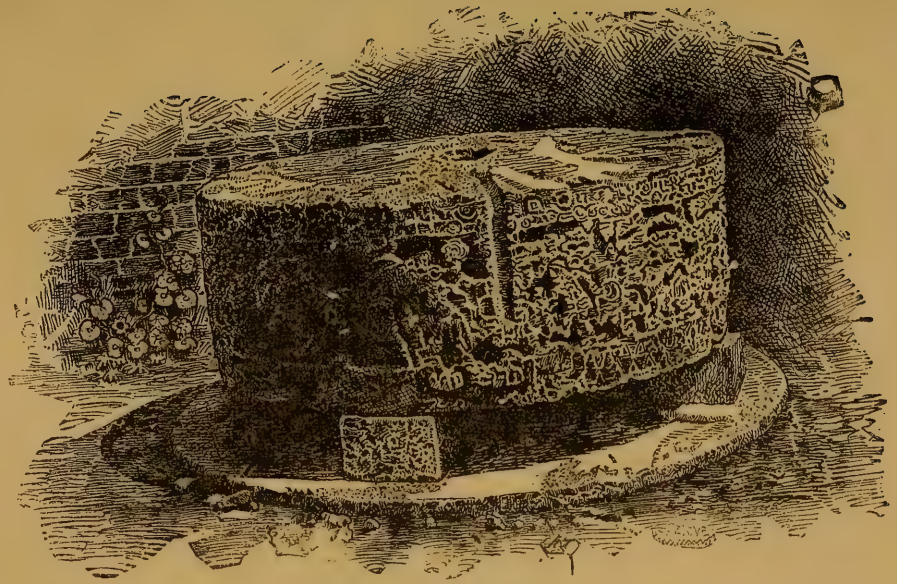
[A. D. 1510.] In 1508 and the year following he made 5000 prisoners, which were reserved for sacrifice in 1510. This was the year in which he had brought to Mexico a new sacrificial stone. Instead of acting upon the advice of the King of Tezcoco, and desisting from further bloodshed, he listened to the counsel of his priests, who declared that only blood, shed in copious streams, could avert the threatened punishment of his gods. Then he sought for a stone large enough to form a fitting addition to his magnificent temple. It was found in the quarries near Cojoacan, and after it was hewn to the required size it was brought to Mexico. A vast concourse attended it, and the high-priest marched before it, muttering prayers and scattering incense. In crossing one of the wooden bridges over a canal, this immense mass broke through and fell into the water. The miserable priest and many of the men engaged in drawing it were drowned, or crushed to death, and the people rendered very unhappy by this event. They drew it out again, after incredible exertions, and finally deposited it near, or on, the temple. This stone may be seen to-day, in the Museum of Mexico, an elaborately chiselled block of basalt, nine feet in diameter and three feet in height. Those Mexican sculptors pa-

tiently carved its sides and upper surface, the sides representing a procession of victors despoiling or slaying their captives. The upper surface is cut in symmetrical designs, and in the centre is a hollow with a gutter leading to the edge of the stone. This was to receive the blood of their victims, after they had been thrown upon the stone and their breasts cut open — as described on a preceding page.

This memorial of Aztec barbarity was discovered in 1790, in the great square where the temple formerly stood, which was demolished during the siege of the city. *Twelve thousand* prisoners, were, it is said, sacrificed upon this stone at its dedication, in the year 1510.

All the nobility of the kingdom were invited to be present at the ceremonial, and departed laden with presents; for the king, Montezuma, was a generous king, giving away the products of earth with as unsparing a hand as he took the human lives entrusted to his keeping.

[A. D. 1515.] Up to the year 1515, the armies of Montezuma were constantly engaged in different parts of the empire, in quelling riots and in extending its limits. At this period they had acquired all the territory they held at the coming of the Spaniards. If you would ascertain the extent of Aztec dominion at this time, and will turn to a map of Mexico, you will find that territory comprised in the modern states of Mexico, Puebla, San Luis Potosi and some of Tamaulipas, Queretaro, Vera Cruz, Guerrero, Western Oaxaca and Chiapas. South of Chiapas the Mexicans had penetrated even to Guatemala, and perhaps to Nicaragua, but had acquired no permanent foothold there. The Aztec empire thus extended from Gulf to Ocean, not directly across, but touching both coasts at different points; it comprised a large area, though not altogether entirely subjugated. During the reign of Ahu-



SACRIFICIAL STONE.

itzotl it had attained to the zenith of its power and glory; although territory had been added since, yet the empire was sensibly weaker. As an ancient historian truly says: "Every province which was conquered created a new enemy to the conquerors, who became impatient of the yoke to which they were not accustomed, and only waited an opportunity of being revenged and restoring themselves to their wonted liberty. It would appear that the happiness of a kingdom consists, not in the extension of the dominions, nor the number of its vassals, but, on the contrary, that it approaches at no time nearer to its final period than when, on account of its vast and unbounded extent, it can no longer maintain the necessary union among its parts, nor that vigor which is requisite to withstand the multitude of its enemies."

Nezahualpilli, King of Tezcoco, was greatly depressed by the forebodings of the oracles, and retired to his pleasure-retreat of Tezcosingo, where he shut himself up with his favorite wife, Xocotzin. Six months later, he returned to his palace in Tezcoco, and there died in seclusion, wishing, perhaps, that his subjects should think he had been translated to the kingdom of his ancestors, *Ameque-mecan*, like his worthy father before him. Nezahualpilli resembled his father, Nezahualcoyotl, in his love of justice and inflexible administration of his own laws. Having commanded that no person in his kingdom should repeat certain indecent words, on pain of death, he caused the penalty to be carried out against his own son for having addressed them to one of his mistresses. He was the last of that glorious line of Chichimec kings that sat undisturbed upon the throne of Acolhuacan. Through discordant elements, directly traceable to his own sins, his kingdom was divided against itself, one portion taking part with the Mexicans and the other with the Spaniards, in the coming contest.

[A. D. 1516.] *Cacamatzin*, the first-born of the late king's sons by his first marriage — to the Mexican princess — was the choice of the electors to fill the throne. This was violently opposed by *Ixtlilxochitl*, the son of the second princess married by Nezahualpilli, though *Coanocotzin*, the second son, acquiesced in the wisdom of the choice.

Cacamatzin was twenty-two, Coanocotzin twenty, while Ixtlilxochitl was only eighteen. But the latter was the most given to fighting of the three, and, though he may not have been the bravest, was the most quarrelsome. When only three years of age he pushed his nurse into a well, and threw stones upon her. At seven he raised a company of boys, which was the constant torment of peaceful citizens, not even considering their lives. One of the royal council having, very wisely, counselled the king to put to death such a disgraceful wretch, was assassinated by the boy himself. Old Nezahualpilli looked complacently upon the doings of this little imp, being the son of his favorite wife,— though he put one of his sons to death for speaking disrespectfully to one of his mistresses, and another for having commenced a palace without his royal permission.

Cacamatzin was favored by Montezuma, and was crowned King of Tezcoco, while the fiery Ixtlilxochitl withdrew in a rage to the mountains. He was followed by a large force, and raised an army of nearly one hundred thousand men, with which he marched southward against Tezcoco. He took *Otompan*, and made it his capital, and his brothers were glad to send him word that they would divide the kingdom with him, he taking the mountains and they the plain. Ixtlilxochitl returned, that he had no further design against Tezcoco, but that he should maintain his army as a safeguard against the ambitious designs of Montezuma, of whom he warned them. He annoyed the Mexicans greatly, by appearing suddenly at different points in the

valley. He burned alive a general of Montezuma's, who had gone out to capture him, and even had the temerity to dare his uncle, the great Montezuma, to personal combat! We cannot be less amazed than amused at this youth's audacity; his courage seems to have been equal to that of his grandfather, Nezahualcoyotl.

[A. D. 1517.] The year 1517 had been ushered in during the transactions narrated above,—a year big with the fate of the Mexican empire, for in it landed the first Spaniards on the shores of the Mexican Gulf. Let us not forget the condition of things at this time: the constant decrease in strength of the Mexican empire through its repeated acts of aggression, and the position taken by its most important ally, the kingdom of Tezcoco.

Do not lose sight of these three Tezcocan princes, two of whom perished at the hands of the Spaniards, while the wickedest was rewarded with riches and honors. It will appear, when we reach the account of the Conquest, that the great army of the active prince, Ixtlilxochitl, was of the greatest service to the Spanish conqueror, Cortes, second in importance only to that of the brave Tlascallans. Had the Spanish commander known of the condition of things in Anahuac at the time of his coming, he could not have chosen a more auspicious season than that in which he invaded the country.

Montezuma exerted himself to the utmost to appease his incensed gods. One historian tells us that he even ordered the great pyramid-temple of Huitzilopochtli to be covered with gold, feathers, and precious stones, from the ground to the summit platform, and put to death his minister of finance for representing that his subjects could not endure the necessary increase of taxation.

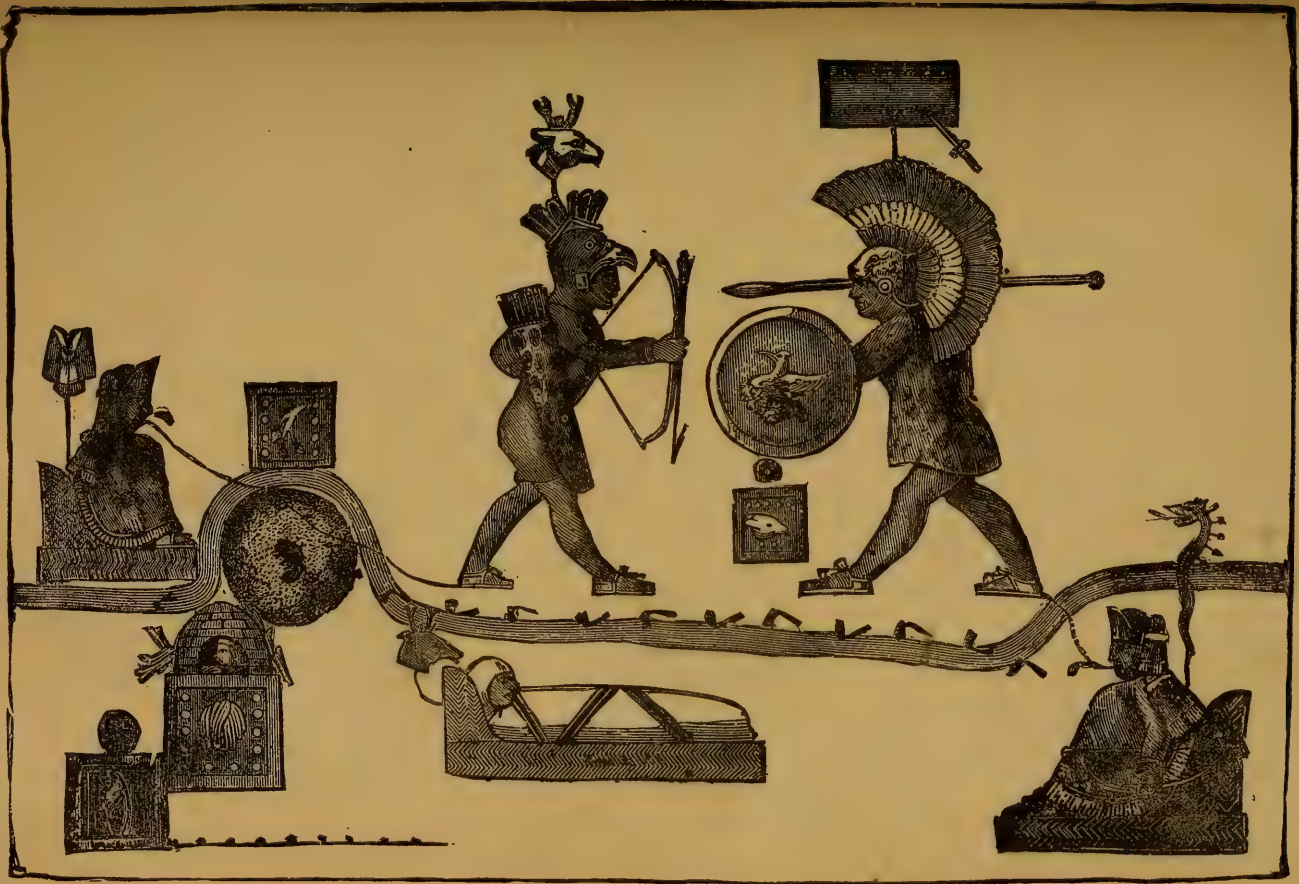
[A. D. 1518] The last great sacrifice in Mexico appears to have been in the year 1518, at the dedication of the

temple of *Coatlan.* "But," says a learned writer,* "almost before the groans of the dying victims had died away there came to the ears of the Aztec sovereign the startling tidings that the *eastern strangers* had again made their appearance, this time on the coast of his own empire." Perhaps nothing had so startled Montezuma as this intelligence, for here was positive confirmation of the truth of the predictions of the oracles. Here at last were those strangers whose coming had been so long expected; they could be no others, for they came from the East. And what was the significance of this? Could they not have come from the West and yet not prove unexpected?

One element of disturbance in the mind of Montezuma was the prophecy of *Quetzalcoatl*, the "Plumed Serpent" (see pages 39 and 40), who had declared at his departure that he would return from the direction in which he went — from the *land of the rising sun.* Centuries had passed since then; the Aztec nation had risen from the obscurity of the marshes of Aztlan to be the greatest empire in the western world. To the inhabitants of this country there was no other world. The two seas bounded it — the Pacific and the Gulf; beyond its shores they not only could not look, but they could not even send their thoughts! These new arrivals, then, could be no others than the children of Quetzalcoatl; they were white, like Quetzalcoatl, and they were bearded, like him, and they came in great canoes that were swept over the water by broad white wings!

The officials of the king on the watch on the coast caused accurate paintings to be made of the Spanish ships of Grijalva — who arrived on the coast in this year — and transmitted a full account of these wonderful strangers to Montezuma. At a royal council, hastily assembled, it was decided that these arrivals were the followers of Quetzal-

* Bancroft, "Native Races of the Pacific States.



AZTEC PICTURE-WRITING.

coatl, and an embassy with rich presents was despatched to propitiate them. They arrived at the coast too late, for Grijalva had sailed for Cuba, leaving the promise of an early return.

Priests and rulers seemed united now in the belief that the Spaniards were the messengers of the prophet, and from this time on the neglected deity, the "Plumed Serpent," was supreme. Upon his altar were deposited various relics of the Spaniards, that had been picked up from time to time, and "his peaceful rites prevailed over the bloody ones of Huitzilopochtli."

Painful must have been the feelings of the proud Montezuma, as he recalled what Mexico had been in the past, and reflected what it was likely to be in the future! Menaced by the brave and wary Ixtlilxochitl, who was constantly drawing surrounding tribes into alliance with him; hated by his own people, whom he had kept so long in bondage; forsaken even by his gods, to whom he had sacrificed thousands of human victims, what gloomy thoughts must have possessed him!

He had abandoned the peaceful worship of Quetzalcoatl for the horrid practices of Huitzilopochtli — the offerings of corn and fruits for those of human hearts — was it possible that the great prophet would regard him with favor at his coming? He must have been, though dimly, conscious that the end of the Aztec Empire was nigh!

CHAPTER XI.

A GLANCE AT THE AZTEC AT HOME.

INDIANS, Columbus called the first men of the new world that met his sight in the Bahamas, and "Indians" they have remained to this day. Not only has the name been applied to those red men of the West India Islands, but to the whole race inhabiting North, South, and Central America.

Did it ever occur to you that there might be a difference among these Indians, as to color, size, nature and acquirements! Has it ever been brought forcibly to your mind that there is as great a difference between the Indians of the North and those of the South as between the varied families of the white race? The Irish and English are not as dissimilar as the Indians of the United States and those of Mexico. The Northern Indians are nomades, wild rovers by nature, possessing few of the arts of civilization; the Southern Indians (as has been remarked in the opening chapters), were fixed to the soil, and had many acquirements to entitle them to high respect. Those Indians, at the time of their discovery by the Spaniards, were remarkably well-formed, of good height, with black eyes and hair, rather narrow foreheads, straight, shapely limbs and remarkable for their endurance.

If allowed to live out the natural term of their years they generally arrived at a good old age. They were very moderate in eating, but indulged in strong drinks frequently to excess. They were patient and long-suffering,

enduring hardships without murmuring, and suffering even death without complaint. They were (and so are their descendants at the present day) generous, grateful for kindness, nor distrustful by nature. "They were by nature taciturn, serious and austere, and showed more anxiety to punish crimes than to reward virtues;" yet were joyous on occasions, and even hilarious. They were not indolent, laziness even being considered by them a vice. Finally, they were courageous, being more affected by superstition than cowardice. To conclude, says the ancient historian, "the character of the Mexicans, like that of every other nation, is a mixture of good and bad; but the bad is easy to be corrected by a proper education, as has frequently been demonstrated by experience."

In regard to the state of civilization amongst the Mexicans, when they were found by the Spaniards, he says, "it was much superior to that of the Spaniards themselves when they were first known to the Phœnicians, that of the Gauls when first known to the Greeks, or that of the Germans and Britons when first known to the Romans." Of this let the future pages speak in evidence.

DRESS OF THE MEXICANS.

Though the very earliest people of Mexico went entirely naked, or partially covered by the skins of wild beasts, they gradually adopted a decent garb as they grew more civilized. The year that the Aztecs first wore garments of cotton is pictured in their annals. The men wore invariably the breech-cloth, and a mantle made of a square piece of cloth about four feet in length; in addition to this, in winter, they wore a sort of sack, with holes for the head and for the arms, reaching below the hips. The rich wore a greater number of and larger mantles, and fringed the ends, besides adorning themselves with

jewelry. The dress of the women was the same as we may see worn in portions of Mexico and Yucatan. It consisted of two articles, the *cueitl*, a sort of petticoat, reaching from the waist to near the ankles, and the *uipil*, or chemise, with very short sleeves, or without any at all, which covered the upper part of the body and thighs. On going out of doors they drew on a larger *uipil*, that descended lower, or perhaps an elegant mantle. Both sexes, especially of the better classes, wore sandals, made of maguey fibre or deer-skins; but probably knew not the use of stockings. The Aztecs wore their hair long and hanging down their back, sometimes twisting it with black thread, as do many Indian women at the present day. Other tribes partially shaved their heads, and others braided their hair, some left a ridge and some left a single scalp-lock. The Aztec women painted their faces in various colors, red, yellow or black, dyed their feet black, and cleaned and painted their teeth with the crimson cochineal. Both men and women had a passion for orna-



DRESS OF THE MEXICANS.

ments; gold, silver and precious stones for the king and the nobility; bone, stone or copper for the plebeians, in the shape of bracelets, anklets, armlets, and rings for the ears, nose, fingers and lower lip. But no subject could wear the same dress or ornament as his king, the penalty was death! The nobles wore in their lips the *chalchihuite*, or native emerald, while the poorer classes thrust eagle-claws and fish-bones through holes bored in their ears, lips, and nose.

The king possessed the greatest variety of mantles of cotton, so finely made as to resemble silk, and wore a different one for every occasion. We can hardly believe that he never wore any dress a second time, as many have pretended. His sandals had golden soles and were ornamented with precious stones; the royal crown was a band of gold rising to a point in front, and sometimes ornamented with the long feathers of the *quetzal*, or royal *trogon*. Besides feather tassels garnished with gold, worn upon the crown of the head, the king sometimes wore chin ornaments of crystal and precious stones, or golden crescents suspended from his under lip. In one account given of the visit of Nezahualcoyotl to the unfortunate King Chimalpopoca, imprisoned in a cage, we read that the king gave the young prince his emerald lip ornament at parting. The great lords bored holes in their noses and wore some kind of precious stones, one on each side. They wore strings of gems about their necks, bracelets of mosaic work, and greaves of thin plates of gold on their legs below the knees. Sometimes they carried a small golden flag in their hand, ornamented with a tuft of brilliant feathers, and wore upon the head a rich-plumed bird with its beak in front and its wings hanging over their temples.

From this plain and sober statement of the costume and ornaments of the higher classes, collected from a

great number of writers, it will be seen that the Aztecs were something more than the "barbarians" some historians would have us believe them to have been.

Soon after the birth of a child, the diviners were consulted as to its fortune, and a name was given it, taken from the symbol of the day of its birth. Thus, if it was born on the day of the flower, it was called Xochitl, with a proper prefix. One of the Tlascallan chiefs bore the name of Citlalpopoca, "Smoking Star," because he was born at the time of the appearance of a *comet*. On the fifth day of the little one's life its parents gave a great entertainment, and made presents to all their guests. The father fashioned a miniature bow and arrows, if he was a military man, and the child was a boy; if it was a girl, they made a little garment, a spindle and instruments for weaving. These were buried in certain places — the instruments of war in the fields, those for the little girl in the house, under the stone for grinding corn. The babe was taken to the middle of the court and bathed, its nurse making a little speech to it as she undressed it, as follows: "My child, the gods, *Ometeuctli* and *Omecihuatl*, lords of heaven, have sent thee to this dismal and calamitous world. Receive this water which is to give thee life;" and, bathing and rubbing its limbs, she continued: "Where art thou, ill-fortune? In what limb art thou hid? Go far from this child." "She then dressed and laid him in the cradle, *Cozolli*, praying *Joalticitl*, the goddess of cradles, to warm and guard him in her bosom, and *Joalteuctli*, god of the night, to make him sleep."

Early in life the Mexican children were taught useful lessons in modesty, religion and industry. At five years of age they were either delivered to the priests, to be educated in the seminaries, or their education commenced at home. The Mexican paintings show us the various

steps taken in the bringing up of the children. One goes to the war, with his father, to learn the use of arms and to be courageous; another carries a small pack upon his back to market with his father; the little girls are early taught to spin and weave.

They abhorred a lie, and the child that told one had its lips pricked with a thorn of the aloe; if it persisted in lying, its lip was slightly split. Girls were instructed to remain at home, and if prone to walk about, their feet were tied. These Aztec fathers understood the beneficial effect of a "dose of birch," and in one of the paintings is a representation of a loving parent holding a rod over his son's back. If the boys were very refractory they were held over the smoke of burning paper until nearly suffocated. They were obliged at all times to sleep upon a hard bed, a mat spread on the floor, and to eat the plainest food.

At the seminaries, the priests seem to have had it all their own way with the boys, pricking them with aloes-thorns and throwing firebrands at their heads if they were disobedient. It was not all a pastime, going to school in those days. Corporal punishment, as the Aztecs understood it, meant something more than a few strokes of a ferule! In one of the paintings we see a naughty boy of twelve, bound hand and foot; and a bad girl was obliged to rise in the night and sweep the house — no great task, by the way, as the houses of the poorer classes consisted of only a single room. Between thirteen and fifteen, the boys brought wood from the mountains, made trips across the lakes in canoes, and supplied the family with fish; the girls ground corn, did the cooking and weaving.

Schools were established for children of either sex; they were always kept apart; they were hardly allowed to speak to one another. In the colleges, the boys and girls re-

ceived chiefly religious instruction, were taught to sweep the temples, to gather wood for sacrifice, to clean and replenish the censers, and above all to fear and reverence the idols. When they left the seminaries it was either to be married or to go into the army. If a young collegiate did not then choose a wife it fared hard with him, should he desire one later, for hardly a girl would even look at him!

The maidens who attended the female seminaries were chiefly daughters of nobles and princes. They were strictly guarded and watched over by vestal priestesses; and old men prowled about the outside of the building to keep off the boys. There were no evening serenades nor moonlight rambles for the young ladies of those seminaries, for if a girl was detected in even looking at a young man she was severely punished; and if she should presume to go to walk with him, her feet were tied together and pricked with sharp thorns! Death, even, was the penalty for the infraction of some of the rules. There, the young ladies learned how to spin and weave mantles, and to make the beautiful feather-work; they, too, were obliged to sweep the temples and to tend the sacred fires. They were made to bathe often and to give great attention to personal cleanliness, to be skillful and tidy in domestic affairs. Both sexes were taught to hold their tongue in the presence of their elders, to answer them with reverence, and to be modest in their behavior.

There are those who have said that these people were savages, who have called them barbarians. Let the reader judge if barbarians would take such jealous care of their children, if they would instruct them so judiciously. Let the reader form his opinion of them from their acts and discourses; let him reflect upon the following good advice given by parents to their children. As rendered by the

early historians, it is too long to be produced here in full, fragments only can be given:—

"My son," said the Mexican father, "we know not how long heaven will grant to us the enjoyment of that precious gem we possess in thee; but, however short the period, endeavor to live exactly, praying God continually to assist thee! Mock not, my son, the aged or the imperfect. Scorn not him whom you shall see fall into some folly or transgression, nor make him reproaches; but restrain thyself, and beware lest thou fall into the same error which offends thee in another. Go not where thou art not called, nor interfere in that which does not concern thee. Endeavor to manifest thy good breeding in all thy words and actions. In conversation do not lay thy hands upon another, nor speak too much, nor interrupt or disturb another's discourse. When any one discourses with thee, hear him attentively, and hold thyself in an easy attitude; neither playing with thy feet nor putting thy mantle to thy mouth, nor spitting too often, nor looking about you here and there. When thou art at table do not eat voraciously, nor show thy displeasure if anything displeases thee. If any one comes unexpectedly to dinner with thee share with him what thou hast, and when any person is entertained by thee do not fix thy looks upon him. When anything is given thee accept it with tokens of gratitude; if the present is great, do not become vain or fond of it; if small, do not despise it or be provoked. If thou becomest rich, do not grow insolent, nor scorn the poor; for those very gods who deny riches to others in order to give them to thee, offended by thy pride, will take from thee to give to others.

"Never tell a falshood, because a lie is a heinous sin. Speak ill of nobody. Be not dissolute, because, thereby thou wilt incense the gods, and they will cover thee with

infamy. Steal not, nor give thyself up to gaming; otherwise thou wilt be a disgrace to thy parents, whom thou oughtest rather to honor, for the education they have given thee. If thou wilt be virtuous, thy example will put the wicked to shame.

"No more, my son; enough has been said in discharge of the duties of a father. With these counsels I wish to fortify thy mind. Refuse them not, nor act in contradiction to them; for on them thy life and all of thy happiness depend."

Now, this is not the language of a savage, nor — making allowance for the embellishment it may have received at the hands of the chronicler — is this the speech of one insensible to the higher duties of life. What a paradox is here before us, when we compare the moral with the religious life of this people!

Let us see how the Mexican mother advised her daughter, when the time came for her to leave her: "My daughter, I have endeavored to bring thee up with greatest possible care, and thy father has wrought and polished thee like an emerald, that thou mayest appear in the eyes of men a jewel of virtue. Strive always to be good, for otherwise who will have thee for a wife; thou will be rejected by every one. Life is a thorny, laborious path, and it is necessary to exert all our powers to obtain the goods which the gods are willing to yield to us; we must not, therefore, be lazy or negligent, but diligent in everything. Be orderly, and take pains to manage the economy of thy house. Wherever thou goest, go with modesty and composure, without hurrying thy steps, or laughing with those whom thou meetest, nor casting thy eyes thoughtlessly first to one side and then to the other. Employ thyself diligently in spinning and weaving, in sewing and embroidering; for by these acts thou wilt gain esteem.

"In whatever thou doest encourage not evil thoughts, but attend solely to the service of the gods, and the giving of comfort to thy parents. If thy father or thy mother calls thee, do not stay to be called twice, but go instantly to know their pleasure.

"Keep not company with dissolute, lying, or idle women; otherwise they infallibly infect thee by their example. Attend upon thy family, and do not go on slight occasions out of the house, nor be seen wandering through the streets, or in the market-place; for in such places thou will meet thy ruin. Remember, that vice, like a poisonous herb, brings death to those who taste it; and when it once harbors in the mind it is difficult to expel it.

"Enter not without some urgent motive into another's house, that nothing may be either said or thought injurious to thy honor; but if thou enterest into the house of thy relations, salute them with respect, and do not remain idle, but immediately take up a spindle to spin, or do any other thing that occurs.

"When thou art married respect thy husband, obey him and diligently do what he commands thee. Avoid incurring his displeasure, nor show thyself passionate or ill-natured; but receive him fondly to thy arms, even if he is poor and lives at thy expense. If he occasions thee any disgust let him not know thy displeasure at the time; but afterwards tell him with gentleness what vexed thee, that he may be won by thy mildness and offend thee no farther. Embrace, my daughter, the counsel which I give thee; I am already advanced in life and have had sufficient dealings with the world. *I am thy mother.* I wish that thou mayest live well. Fix my precepts in thy heart, for then thou wilt live happy. If, by not listening to me, or by neglecting my instructions, any misfortune befall thee, the fault will be thine, and the evil also.

"Enough, my child, may the gods prosper thee!"

No comment is necessary upon this advice. Setting aside the minor references to customs of the country and the gods, what better counsel could even a Christian mother offer to a beloved daughter than that of this Pagan?

The marriageable age was, for the young man, twenty to twenty-two; for the young woman, sixteen to eighteen. The astrologers were first consulted, and if all promised fair, the parents of the young man sent certain female solicitors to the girl's family asking their daughter of them. This first demand was always refused, no matter how rich and respectable the young man might be, as it would have been contrary to custom to do otherwise. A few days later the old women made a second demand, which the girl's parents finally acceded to. She was sent to the house of the bridegroom, if of noble birth, borne on a litter; if humble, carried on the back of a bridesmaid; in any case accompanied by a great company of friends and by music. After much good advice had been given them they both sat down upon a new mat in the centre of the nuptial chamber, and the priest performed the marriage ceremony by tying together a corner of the *huepilli*, or gown, of the bride and the mantle of the groom. They then offered copal, or incense gum, to their gods, and exchanged presents. At the wedding feast, which followed, they alternately fed one another and gave morsels to their guests. Four days they remained engaged in fasting and prayer, never leaving the room except to offer incense to their idols, certain old women watching with them. Two mats of rushes served them as couches, which had as charms against evil, feathers and a native emerald, the *chalchihuitl*, and at their four corners were laid sharp spines of the aloe, with which they were to prick their ears and tongues, drawing blood in

honor of the god of matrimony. After four days were passed, they dressed themselves in new garments and carried the mats, canes, and remaining eatables to the temple, as a present to the idols, concluding the ceremony by making presents to the guests, who adorned their hands and feet with red feathers.

In one district of Anahuac, a man wishing to marry presented himself before the priest, who cut off a lock of his hair in front of the idol, and pointed him out to the people as he descended the steps. They at once commenced shouting, "This man wishes to marry," and the first free woman the man met was obliged to become his wife.

In the Miztec country, after the garments had been tied together, the priest cut off a portion of their hair, and the man carried the woman about awhile on his back.

Though polygamy was permitted to the kings and nobles of Mexico, it is thought that they had but one legitimate wife; while the poorer people were generally faithful to one alone.

When death overtook the Mexican, his body was given in charge of certain men, who dressed it in the garb of the god who presided over the family of the deceased; if a man of war, that of *Huitzilopochtli;* if he had been drowned, he was dressed in the habit of *Tlaloc;* while if he had died a drunkard, in that of *Tezcatzoncatl*, the god of wine! After placing a jug of water at his head, to serve him on his long journey, they gave the deceased different slips of paper; the first was a passport "between the two mountains which fight together;" the second would enable him to go over "the road of the great serpent;" the third, through "the place of the fierce alligator," etc. They also burnt his weapons of war and some of his household goods, that the heat of the fire might protect him from the "cold of the terrible wind." They killed a *techichi*, or dumb dog, and, tying a

string about its neck, buried or burned it with the remains of its master; this was to guide him over the deep river, *Chiuhnahuapan*, the "New Waters." After burning, the ashes were gathered in an earthen pot and buried.

At the death of a member of royalty great ceremonies were observed. The corpse was clothed in many garments of fine cotton, ornamented with gold, silver and gems, an emerald hung from the under lip and the face covered with a mask. A funeral pile was prepared of resinous and odorous wood, and the royal corpse placed upon it and burned, with the arms and ensigns of the late king. The only repulsive part of the ceremony was the sacrifice of slaves and some of the king's jesters, that he might have agreeable company to the other world. Sometimes, though rarely, they sacrificed some of his wives, and always the *techichi*, that little animal that was to act as a guide in dangerous places. The ashes of the king, together with the emerald that hung in his lip, were put into a box which contained some of his hair, cut at an early age, and at his death, and then deposited in the tomb. On the fourth, twentieth, fortieth, sixtieth, and eightieth day afterwards, they made sacrifice and offerings of eatables over the sepulchre, and on each yearly anniversary, for four years, they made offerings of quails, rabbits, flowers, and butterflies. Sometimes a great deal of gold or treasure was buried with a king or noble.

CHAPTER XII.

RELIGION, GODS AND GODDESSES.

By a people's conceptions of a future state many have often presumed to judge of their advance towards, or into, civilization. The Mexicans vaguely worshipped a Supreme Being, invisible and unchangeable, whom they called *Teotl*, or God; him they feared, though they regarded him as a friend of mankind.

The great enemy of man they considered to be an evil spirit, whom they called *Tlacatecolototl*, or the "Rational Owl." Instead of regarding the owl as the symbol of wisdom, as did the Greeks, they made it the personification of evil and dark deeds. They believed the soul to be immortal. Soldiers who were killed in battle, or slain in captivity, and the spirits of women who died in child-birth, went at once to the house of the sun, whom they considered as the "Prince of Glory," where they led a life of endless delight; "where, every day, at the first appearance of the sun's rays, they hailed his birth with rejoicings, and with dancing, and the music of instruments and voices, attended him to his meridian; there they met the souls of the women, and with the same festivity accompanied him to his setting. After four years, these spirits went to animate the clouds, and birds of beautiful feathers and sweet song; but always at liberty to rise again to heaven, or to descend upon the earth to warble and suck the flowers."

The souls of the wicked departed to a place of utter darkness, called *Mictlan*, or hell, where it seems they underwent no other punishment than that of being deprived of light.



AZTEC IDOL.

Had the Mexicans been content with worshipping only the great and invisible god, *Teotl*, and in offering him the first-fruits of their fields and gardens, all would have been well with them. But from the time that priests arose among them, so-called men of God, dated their woes and miseries. They made idols, which they pretended were images of the deities, and these the people adored — first as the representatives of God; then they lost sight of the Supreme Being, and worshipped the senseless stone.

The greatest god to whom they gave external form, and who ranked next to the invisible God, was *Tezcatlipoca*, the "Shining Mirror," the master of heaven and earth, the creator of all things. He meted out rewards and punishments; he was ever youthful, ever powerful. It was declared by some that he had descended from heaven by a rope of spider's webs. He it was who drove from the country the great high-priest of Tula, the benevolent *Quetzalcoatl*

(see Chap. II.). His image was carved from *teotl* (divine stone), like polished black marble; it was ornamented with gold and gems. Stone seats were placed at the corners of the streets for that god to rest on when he came to earth.

Huitzilopochtli, or *Mexitli*, was the god of war, the "Mexican Mars." He was the deity most highly honored by the Aztecs, to whom they offered most of the terrible sacrifices spoken of in the preceding pages. By referring to the first migration of the Aztecs, you will see that he was created during that journey. He was said by some to have been born of a woman named *Coatlicue*, whose children prepared to kill her before this last child should be born. They were about putting her to death when Huitzilopochtli sprang at once into existence, fully armed, with a spear in his right hand, a shield on his left arm, a crest of green feathers on his head, and his legs adorned with feathers. He fell upon the would-be murderers with such fury that he soon killed them all; and after that he was known as the "terrible god." It was in his honor that the first temple of Tenochtitlan was built, at the foundation of the city, in 1325, after he had conducted his followers to the spot.

Ometeuctli and *Omecihuatl* were the names of a god and goddess who dwelt in a magnificent city in the heavens, from which they watched over the world and gave to mortals what they asked of them.

Cihuacohuatl, the woman serpent, was believed to have been the first woman in the world that had children, and she always had twins.

Tonatricli and *Meztli* were deifications of the sun and moon. The pyramids of Teotihuacan were dedicated to them; and of this place, and the primitive people once assembled there, they relate a pretty fable. It seems

that after the first great deluge there sprang sixteen hundred heroes, from a flint flung from heaven. These were at that time the only men on earth, and they prayed their mother, *Omecihuatl*, to create men to serve them. She directed them to go down to *Mictlan* and ask of the god of hell, Mictlanteuctli, some bones of men that had died; these they were to sprinkle with their own blood, and from them men and women would be created who would afterwards multiply. One of the heroes, *Xolotl*, went down to hell and begged a thigh-bone of old Mictlanteuctli, who gave it to him, but, when Xolotl turned and ran with it, pursued him in a rage. Xolotl escaped with it to his brothers, but in his haste fell and broke the bone. This is the reason why mankind are of different sizes, owing to their origin from different fragments.

There was no sun in those days, it having been extinguished in the great catastrophe. They assembled around a great fire in Teotihuacan and danced about it, and they told their servants that the one who would sacrifice himself by casting himself into the flames should become a sun. At this, an intrepid man named *Nanahuatzin* threw himself into the fire. True to the prediction, at the appointed time the sun rose in the east, but he had hardly emerged above the horizon when he stopped. The heroes sent a polite message, asking that he would continue on his way up the sky, as a well-behaved sun ought to do. The sun replied that he would not stir a peg until they were all put to death. One of the heroes named *Citli* then shot an arrow at the sun, which the luminary escaped by dodging; but at the third arrow he got enraged and cast it back, fixing it in the forehead of Citli, who fell dead. Then the brothers all fell upon one another and perished, the last one, dying by his own hand, being Xolotl. The god, *Tezcatlipoca*, seeing the men, now without masters, very sad, directed one of them

to go to the house of the sun and bring music to celebrate the festival, and in order that he might do so he created a bridge of whales and tortoises, over which he crossed the sea, singing a song the god had given him.

This is related as a specimen of a Mexican fable, or tradition, and to show (as they say) whence they first derived the custom of sacrifice, whence they obtained music, songs, and dancing.

Another of the men is said to have followed the example of Nanahuatzin, and threw himself into the fire, but the flames being less bright, he only became a *moon*. To him was dedicated the pyramid of the moon, at Teotihuacan, and to Nanahuatzin that of the sun.

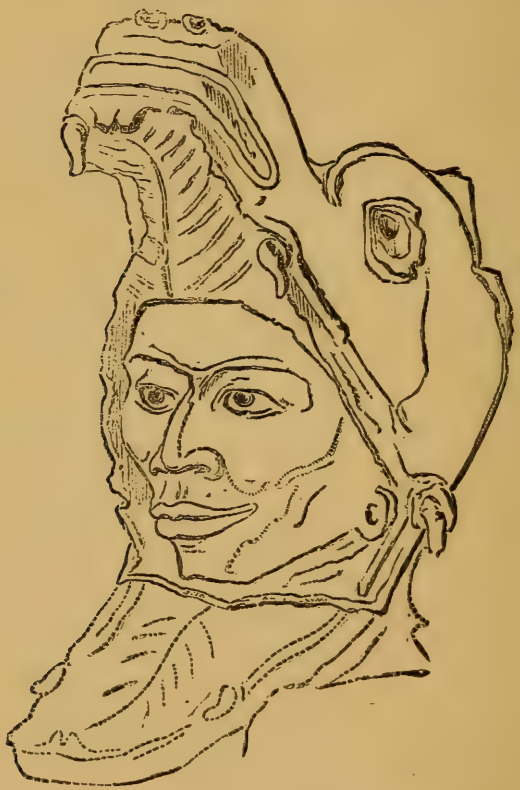
Quetzalcoatl was "god of the air" (see pages 39 and 40 for a full description of him), highly reverenced, in portions of Mexico, and by some considered equal with Tezcatlipoca.

Then there was a "god of the water," *Tlaloc* (master of paradise), "fertilizer of the earth and protector of the earthly gods." He resided on the summit of the highest mountain, probably the volcano Popocatapetl, where the clouds were formed and whence the streams descended. An image of Tlaloc, the oldest in Mexico, and supposed to have been made by the ancient Toltecs, was found on a mountain by the Chichimecs when they arrived in Anahuac. This image, which was of white stone, was taken away by King Nezahualpilli, and a black one substituted. This was soon struck by lightning, and the priests declaring this to be a punishment from heaven, the ancient white one was replaced, and worshipped till broken by a Spanish bishop, at a general destruction of the gods. Tlaloc had a companion goddess, *Chalchihuitlicue*, who resided in the storm-clouds.

Xiuhteuctli was the god of fire, to whom the Mexicans

burned incense and offered the first morsel of food and draught at meals by throwing them into the fire.

The great goddess of the Totonacs was *Centeotl*, worshipped also under the name of *Tonantzin*, goddess of the earth and corn, who had a temple on the top of a high mountain, and was served by a great number of priests. This



goddess of grain was a true Mexican *Isis*, who presided over the crops, granting bountiful harvests. The Mexicans, who seem to have adopted this deity, alone stained her altars with human blood.

Gloomiest of the gods was *Mictlanteuctli*, god of hell, and his awful spouse, *Mictlancihuatl*, who was believed to dwell in darkness in the interior of the earth.

Joalteuctli was god of the night; *Joalticitl*, the goddess of cradles, who watched over children in the darkness of night.

There were several gods of war, besides the great Huitzilopochtli, sort of younger brothers, or adjutants. Every trade had its patron deity, like *Jacateuctli*, god of commerce and the merchants; *Xipe*, the god of the goldsmiths, whom no one could neglect to worship without being afflicted with itch and boils; *Nappateuctli*, god of the mat-weavers, a jolly, generous sort of a god, the best-hearted of the lot. *Mixcoatl* was the goddess of hunting; *Opochtli* the god of fishing, the inventor of nets and fish-spears. *Huixtocihuatl* was the goddess of salt, who had been driven to the bottom of a lake by Tlaloc, and in whose honor the Mexicans committed a barbarous sacrifice yearly. *Tzapotlatenan*, goddess of physic, invented a very powerful oil called *oxitl*, and useful drugs. *Tezcatzoncatl* was the god of wine, called also, from the effects his beverage produced, "the strangler;" and "the drowner." *Ixtlilton* was a god of physic; *Coatlicue*, the goddess of flowers, whose festival was celebrated in the spring months; while *Tlazolteotl* was the pardoner of special sins.

Teotionan was the "mother of the gods," created by the murder and deification of that unfortunate princess in the first years of Aztec national existence.

Finally, there were the little gods (Tepitoton), or household images, of which the kings and great lords had six in their chambers, the nobles four, and the lower people two; besides which they also adorned the corners of the streets.

Those mentioned above are the most noted gods only, for it is believed that there was a god for every day in the year, — even as people of our day, of certain religions, have a *saint* for every day in the calendar.

Though the most celebrated god in Mexico was *Huitzilo-*

pochtli; in Cholula it was *Quetzalcoatl;* among the Totonacs, *Centeotl;* and among the Otomies it was *Mixcoatl.*

They were made of clay, and of stone, often of gold, and sometimes of gems. One of the first Spanish missionaries to the Miztecs found one cut from a precious emerald, which, refusing all offers for it, he ground to powder! Many thousands were destroyed by the monks and priests, after the Spanish invasion, but many were preserved and may be seen to-day. In the famous Mexican museum, in the capital of Mexico, you may find the images



of *Huitzilopochtli*, of *Tezcatlipoca*, *Mictlanteuctli*, and a host of minor deities, in a good state of preservation. Cast down from his high position at the destruction of the *teocalli*, Huitzilopochtli lay buried for many years, but was finally exhumed, in the year 1790, and set up in a court of the museum, no longer an object of worship, but of curiosity.

The Mexicans prayed upon their knees, with their faces toward the east, and performed fasts, penances, and sacrifices like other superstitious nations. We have already mentioned how it was that the Mexicans had so many gods — because they *adopted* those of the people they conquered; but besides the temples they erected to them they also had a great, cage-like *prison*, where they *confined* the idols of many conquered nations!

A portion of this chapter will now be devoted to a description of those repulsive sacrifices, without which no important feast or festival was allowed to terminate. Though the plebeian portion of the Mexicans lived upon the poorest and scantiest food, yet everybody feasted and entertained his friends once in a season. As his guests arrived he presented them with flowers and made them welcome to his house.

The Mexican year contained eighteen months of twenty days each, and each month contained at least one festival. The first month (which commenced in February) held the first feast to Tlaloc, in which children were sacrificed and gladiatorial combats ensued, upon the stone for that purpose in the temple-yard. This was previous to planting; but some of the children were reserved for the altars during the months of March and April, to insure the necessary rains for their crops. Xipe, the god of the goldsmiths, demanded the most cruel of all sacrifices, for after the prisoners had been murdered in the customary way, by having their hearts cut out, they were skinned. On this account this festival was called the "feast of the flaying of men." A second feast to Tlaloc was offered in April, at which time the filthy skins of the victims to Xipe (which some writers say had been *worn by the priests* during twenty days) were carried to a temple and deposited in a cave. In the month of April, also, the flower-traders celebrated in a more pleasing manner the festival of Coatlicue, the goddess of flowers, by offerings of garlands of flowers. In the fourth month occurred the "great watch," when the priests, nobility and people kept strict watch throughout the nights, and did severe penance.

A festival to *Centeotl*, goddess of maize, also occurred in this month, in which were sacrificed human beings, quails, and other animals. Ears of corn were carried by

girls to the temple, and after having been offered to the goddess, were returned to the granaries, that they might preserve the rest from decay.

The fifth month was nearly wholly given up to festivals, but the principal one was that in honor of *Tezcatlipoca.* Ten days previous to its arrival, a priest wandered through the streets, sounding a clay flute. "Upon hearing the sound of this flute, all kneeled down; criminals were thrown into the utmost terror and consternation, and with tears implored the god to grant a pardon to their transgressions, and hinder them from being discovered and detected; warriors prayed to him for courage and strength, successful victories, and a multitude of prisoners for sacrifices;" and all the people, using the same ceremony of taking up and eating the dust, supplicated with fervor the clemency of the gods. The idol was newly decorated and adorned, and as the day arrived, a procession was formed, moving towards the temple; young men and girls carried wreaths of maize leaves, and bound them about the head of the idol, while the youths and virgins of the temple, as well as the nobles, carried similar wreaths. After doing penance, by lashing their backs with knotted cords, they made bountiful offerings of gold, gems, flowers, animals, and provisions, all of which finally found their way into the habitations of the priests. Then came the sacrifice of the victim. This god, Tezcatlipoca, did not require a multitude of prisoners to be killed in honor of him; only one. But the circumstances attending the murder of this one were so heartlessly cruel as to cause our sympathies to go out to him as they could not to a thousand others who were killed in a body. He was selected a year before the festival, the finest and bravest of all their prisoners. In company with another young man, selected as the victim to the god of war, he roamed the city at pleasure, but always

strongly guarded. He was everywhere reverenced as the living image of that supreme divinity, Tezcatlipoca. Every pleasure of life was allowed him, and twenty days before the festival he was married to four beautiful virgins, who exerted all their arts of pleasing to divert his attention from the terrible fate so shortly to befall him. For five days previous to the festival he was feasted with everything the land produced. On the evening of the last day he dismissed his wives, took leave of everything dear to him on earth, and delivered himself up to be sacrificed. He was stretched upon the sacrificial stone, and his heart torn out by the high priest and offered to Tezcatlipoca.



The bodies of common victims were usually thrown down the steps of the temple, but this one was borne tenderly to the bottom of the pyramid and there beheaded, and his skull added to the many thousands adorning the *Tzompantli*, or temple of skulls. We are told that his arms and legs were dressed and cooked for the tables of the nobles and priests, and it has been often repeated that the children sacrificed to Tlaloc were likewise prepared for the table; but many think there is not sufficient evidence on which to accuse these Aztecs of cannibalism.

Races between the students, dances, offerings to the idol and a general dismissal from the seminaries of all boys and girls of a marriageable age, terminated the fes-

tivities in honor of the great god, Tezcatlipoca. The god of war, Huitzilopochtli, demanded a festival in this month. The priests formed an image of him and bore it about the streets, and a great number of quails were killed and thrown at the foot of the altar. The priests and nobles encouraged this sort of thing, because it gave them delicious food for their tables sufficient to last many days. Then was sacrificed the companion to the victim of Tezcatlipoca, the young man of perfect shape and bearing, who had been selected a twelvemonth previously. Though he had been for a year recognized as the visible presence of Huitzilopochtli, he had not been adored, as had his companion. Though doomed to die on a certain day, he had been allowed to ramble about the city as he pleased. On the last fatal morning he was dressed in a curious dress of painted paper, and his head adorned with a mitre of eagle feathers; over his shoulder he carried a small nét and a bag, and in this costume he danced carelessly with the courtiers. That day was his last; his last hour was to come when he should deliver himself to the cruel priests; when he had done this, his breast was cut open in the arms of one of the priests, and his heart extracted. Dances and offerings of incense concluded the festival.

In June, in the sixth month, the god Tlaloc had his third and last festival, when the temple was strewn with rushes from one of the lakes. If the barbarous priests met any one on their way to fetch those rushes, they plundered them of all their possessions, beating them unmercifully if they offered resistance. Attended by a great multitude of people, they went out in canoes to a certain portion of the lake, where there was a whirlpool, and there drowned two children. Either in this month, or one of the preceding, they had sacrificed other children by shutting them up in caves, leaving them to starve to death. All

this was done at the bidding of the priests, that the god Tlaloc might send them plenteous rains!

The goddess of salt, *Huixtocihuatl*, claimed a victim in the seventh month, which began the last of June. This time it was a woman. This month was given up to rejoicings; the people went hunting in the mountains, and the nobility exercised the troops and organized flotillas of canoes upon the lakes.

The eighth month fell due upon the middle of July, when a second feast to Centeotl, called now *Xilonen*, or tender maize, was prepared. The kings and nobles gave away food and drink, and priests and nobles made each other presents. At sunset, on the last day of the feast, occurred a dance of the nobility and the military, with whom danced a female prisoner, who represented the goddess Centeotl, and who was sacrificed with other prisoners as the sun went down.

In the ninth month they held a feast to the god of commerce; and in the tenth, that of the god of fire, *Xiuhteuctli*, when they surpassed all former cruelties by torturing their prisoners with fire. The owners of the prisoners dyed their bodies bright red, to represent the flames, and the night before the horrid sacrifice went with their captives to the temple, where they danced till morning. As the hour arrived, each one took his victim upon his back, and danced about a great fire kindled in the court, into which they threw them, one by one, having previously partially stupefied them by the powder of a certain herb, which they shook in their faces. After the poor wretches were half roasted, they drew them out of the coals and bore them to the sacrificial stone, where the priests completed the hellish work by tearing out their hearts.

In the eleventh month was the festival devoted to *Teteoinan*, the "mother of the gods." A female prisoner was

the principal victim, slain in memory of that princess of Colhuacan who had been elevated to the high position of mother of all the Mexican gods. She was not killed in the usual manner, upon the stone of sacrifice, but was beheaded upon the back of a priest, and then flayed, and the ghastly offering made to the god of war.

This same month was also devoted to the sweeping of the temples, the repairing of the streets, and the mustering into the army of the youth destined for war.

The twelfth month, beginning on the fourth of October, ushered in the great festival attending the coming of the gods — *Teotlèco.* The temples and the corners of the streets were decorated with branches. At the head of the invisible procession was supposed to be Tezcatlipoca, the deity supreme, and before the door of his sanctuary they spread a palm mat, sprinkled with maize meal. During the night certain priests carefully watched this powdered mat, because when the god came he left the imprint of his foot upon it. And it is very interesting to note, that he always came and left his footprint when nobody was about except the priest on watch. Some incredulous people have affirmed that the god did not come at all, but that the mysterious footprint was made by another priest while the sentinel's back was turned. Be this as it may, it always appeared on the night expected, and then the watchman cried out: "*Our great god is now arrived!*" and the rest of the priests and the people crowded about the temple to gaze upon the divine token of the god's presence, and to sing hymns of thanksgiving. During the two days following, the rest of the gods came straggling in, and the happy people celebrated their arrival in a fitting manner, by dancing about a great fire and pitching into it such prisoners as they had destined for burnt offerings.

The thirteenth month commenced on the last of October,

when they celebrated the feasts of the gods of water and the mountains, making little mountains of paper, serpents of wood, and images out of paste, dancing about them and sacrificing five prisoners, four men and a woman.

On the thirteenth of November commenced the fourteenth month, and the festival of *Mixcoatl*, goddess of the chase, preceded by four days of fasting and self-torture, when, after making vast quantities of arrows and darts for the royal armory, they repaired to the mountains and indulged in a great hunt, sacrificing the animals they then captured.

In the fifteenth month, which began on the third of December, was the great festival to Huitzilopochtli and his brother, when the priests made two statues of a paste composed of seeds and blood, using as bones pieces of acacia wood. A grand and solemn procession followed these statues out into the suburbs of Mexico, traversing in all a distance of more than ten miles, and sacrificing on the route a great many quails and prisoners. After watching these paste statues in the temple over night, the chief priest, next day, in the presence only of the king and some high officials, threw a dart at the chief statue. It passed through its body and it was then said to be dead, and after the heart had been cut out and given to the king, the body was divided into small portions and given to the people to eat. This being for the giving of strength in time of war, only men and warriors were allowed to eat of it.

On the sixteenth month, beginning in the last of December, was another festival to the gods of the water and mountains, when little figures of the mountains were made of seeds and paste, and eaten by the people.

On the seventeenth month happened the feast of the goddess Tlamateuctli, when another female prisoner was sacrificed, after being allowed to dance to a tune the

priests provided, and sing a lament over her unfortunate departure.

The feast of Mictlanteuctli, the god of hell, was celebrated in this month, by the nocturnal sacrificing of prisoners, and another feast, the second, to the god of the merchants.

The first of February finally completed this round of months and horrid festivals with another to the god of fire, when all the fires were extinguished and kindled anew from flame before the altar of that god.

The most solemn of all the festivals was that of the *Teoxihuitl*, or "divine years," at the commencement of their cycle (as has been explained on pp. 121–3), which fell due on the twenty-sixth of February.

These are the principal festivals, though not all, at which more or less of human blood was shed. Leaving this dark and bloody picture, let us turn to one that exhibits the Aztecs in a brighter aspect.

LAWS, GAMES, FOOD, MANUFACTURES, ARTS, AND ARCHITECTURE.

Notwithstanding the cloud from the smoke of sacrifice hung constantly above the lovely valley of Anahuac, it appears from the historic records, that the Aztecs sometimes indulged in lighter enjoyments and possessed many mirth-making games. Though common crimes were punished with terrible severity and the ordinary citizen was closely hedged about by rules, the transgression of which was death, he seems to have had periods of hearty enjoyment. The laws in such a community, where life was held lightly in esteem, were necessarily severe; it is not of importance that we should devote our space to an enumeration of the crimes that entailed the death penalty, and we will merely remark that they were many, as in the days of

Nezahualcoyotl, King of Tezcoco. Many of the transgressors were sacrificed at some of the festivals, especially at that of Xipe, god of the goldsmiths. Slavery was countenanced, though the child of a slave was born *free;* and if a refractory slave — even though his owner had the right to punish him by placing a wooden collar about his neck and selling him for sacrifice — could escape, and gain the royal palace, he was considered free henceforth. More than this, if any one not his owner, or sons of his master, undertook to stop him, he lost his own freedom from that moment.

Their laws and customs — especially as regarding war and the invasion of an enemy's territory — will be more fully dwelt upon in the progress of the Conquest.

A rich and expressive language, like the Mexican tongue, was capable of extensive use in the mouths of poets and orators. They composed hymns almost without number, historical poems, verses on love and morality, in all of which was manifest their love for the objects of nature that surrounded them, to which they made figurative allusions. Nezahualcoyotl, the wise King of Tezcoco, was the great patron of art, and richly rewarded successful composers in the Nahua tongue.

Dramatic poetry received almost as much attention as lyric. In the great square of Tlaltelolco the Mexicans had built a theatre where they had a mimic stage. It was about thirty feet square, and raised twelve or thirteen feet above the level of the market-place, adorned with flowers and feathers. Here, after having dined, the people assembled to witness the actors, "who appeared in burlesque characters, feigning themselves deaf, sick with colds, lame, blind, and crippled, and addressing the idol for a return of health. Others appeared under the names of different little animals, some in the disguise of beetles, some like toads and liz-

ards, while several little boys, belonging to the temple, appeared in the disguise of butterflies and birds of various colors; upon encountering each other they reciprocally explained their employments, which was highly satisfactory to the people, as they performed their parts with infinite ingenuity. This took place at their principal festivals only, when all the spectators made a grand dance, which terminated the ceremony."

Their musical instruments consisted of horns, sea-shells, little flutes or pipes, and two great drums, called respectively *Huehuetl* and *Teponaztli*. The first was a tall cylinder of wood — perhaps only a hollow log — the top of which was covered with a tightly-stretched deer-skin. The second was wholly of wood, with two narrow slits in its centre, and by beating this portion with drumsticks covered with rubber gum they produced a soft, agreeable sound. The sound of the larger could be heard a distance of two or three miles. To the accompaniment of these instruments, the Mexicans sang and danced their sacred dances. The dances were, some of them, of complicated pattern, and could only be learned by long and frequent practice. To this day, this love for music and dancing continues among the Mexicans, and some of their songs, dances, and rude instruments are yet preserved among the people of secluded districts.

In their games proper the Mexicans displayed the greatest ingenuity and patience. That called by the Spaniards the *voladorez*, or "flyers," was a wonderful exhibition, and would even be considered so in modern times. In the centre of some square the young men planted a tall, straight tree, stripped of its branches, and encased it in a wooden cylinder. Four ropes hung from the top, supporting a square frame, to which they tied four other ropes, and twisted them about the tree. Four men, who were to be



MEN FLYING.

the *flyers*, mounted to the top of the tree disguised as great birds, like eagles and herons, and fastening themselves to the ends of the ropes, swung themselves into the air. As they did this the frame was put in motion and they revolved about the tree, the ropes becoming untwisted and their flights wider, until they reached the ground. Usually, an Indian would climb to the top of the cylinder, some sixty feet above the ground, and beat a little drum with one hand while waving a flag with the other. The conception of such a complicated game as this required a high intelligence, while its performance was attended with so much danger as to demand great skill and courage in those who took part in it.

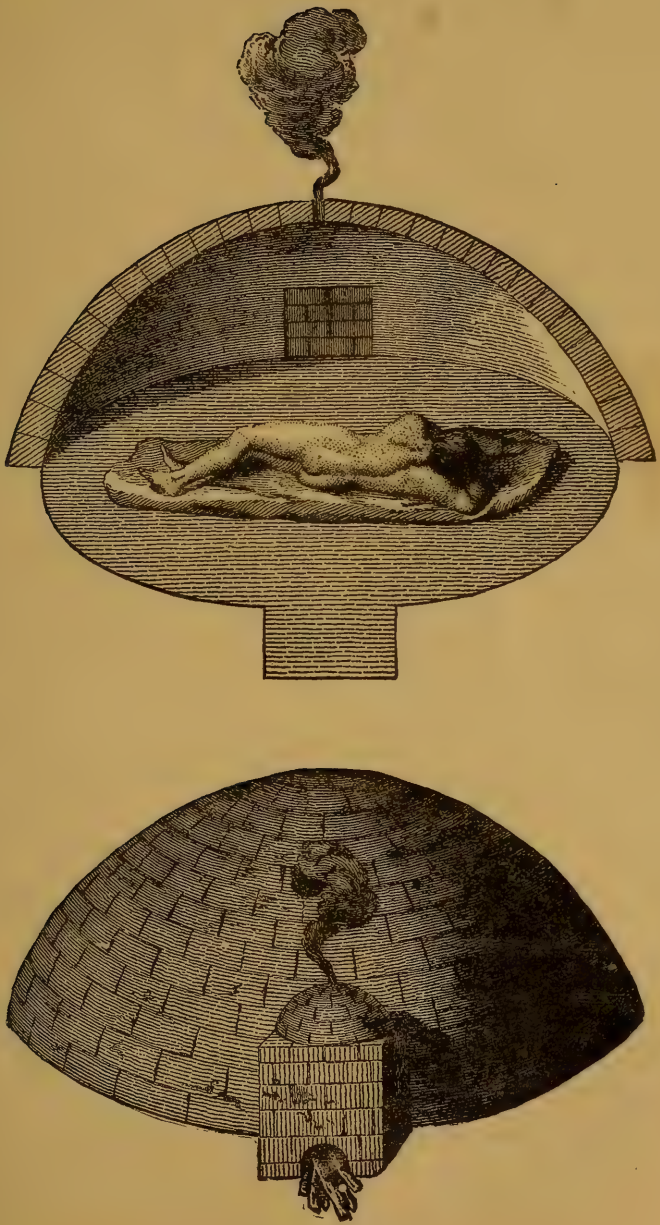
Games of foot-ball were much in vogue among these people, the principal one of which, called *tlacheco*, was indulged in by even the kings and nobles. You will remember that the two kings, of Mexico and Tezcoco, resorted to a game of ball to decide whose interpretation should be given to the omens in the sky, in the year 1508; that the fugitive prince, Nezahualcoyotl, won the favor of the people by his skill at this game, and that the brave Tlascallan chieftain frequently played it. They also had games resembling dice and backgammon, instead of cubes of ivory using large beans marked with dots.

Feats of strength and agility were greatly encouraged in a nation like theirs, given to war, and called upon to undergo great hardships. Some of their acrobatic feats might put to shame many of our athletes of to-day. One is mentioned as having been exhibited before the Pope of Rome by two Mexicans sent over by Cortes. One of them balanced a heavy piece of wood, about eight feet in length, upon his feet, and whirled it round and round, as he lay on his back with his feet in the air, with a man sitting astride each end of the beam. They also performed feats similar

to those common among our acrobats of the present day, such as, a man dancing upon a piece of timber supported on the shoulders of two others; two men dancing upon the head and shoulders of a third, etc.

The attainments of the Mexicans in the higher arts, such as sculpture, historical painting, and the goldsmith's art, were of no mean order. Though compelled to work with instruments of copper, and mainly with chisels of *flint* (as iron and its uses was unknown to them), they executed admirable sculptures in stone, statues of clay, wood, and copper, gold and silver. The vast number of their idols bears witness to their patience and industry, even though thousands have been destroyed, and those we see to-day are not a hundredth part of those produced. It was acknowledged by the gold and silversmiths of Europe that some of the work of the Aztec artists could not be produced by the best workmen among them. Besides the wonderful figures in various metals, gems set in gold, and objects of art and utility, the Mexicans fabricated most wonderful mosaics of the feathers of birds. This feather-work was something entirely new to the Spaniards on their arrival, and an art that seems to have been exclusively of Aztec origin. It is one of the very few that have survived to the present day; perhaps the only one practised in its perfection. In the manufacture of pottery they were very skillful, especially the natives of Cholula, the district in which dwelt the priests of Quetzalcoatl. As weavers, also, they produced admirable cloth of cotton, of the fibres of the maguey, and the mountain palm. They made mats of palm leaves and rushes, twisted thread and ropes of maguey fibre, and dressed the skins of birds and quadrupeds so excellently that they could be worn as garments.

The goddess of medicine, *Tzapopotlatenan*, had a great number of very skillful followers, who understood the



VAPOR BATHS.

hidden virtues of the plants of Mexico and cured desperate diseases and wounds. If we wish a notable example of their skill, we will find it in the curing of the dangerous wounds that were received by Cortes, in the retreat from Mexico, which were healed by simples applied by a Tlascallan physician. As a great preventive against disease the Mexicans used the bath frequently — especially the *Temazcalli*, or vapor-bath, a low, oven-like structure of brick, where steam was generated from the water poured upon heated stones.

What the Aztecs ate, may interest many to know, as in those days the range of food-plants, and animals suitable for the table was quite limited. They had no cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, horses, donkeys or fowls (save turkeys). In the early years of their existence in Anahuac (as we have already seen), they subsisted upon the roots of marsh plants, snakes, lizards, frogs, flies, and flies' eggs; fish of the lake, and small animals, such as rabbits, etc., that they could catch.

Maize, or "Indian corn," was their chief reliance at all times, from the very earliest period of which we have any knowledge, and from it they made those corn-cakes known in the Spanish colonies of America as *tortillas*. These are made from corn that has been soaked in lime-water, crushed to a fine paste between two stones, and formed into thin, wafer-like cakes that are baked upon a stone or metal slab over a quick fire. From this valuable grain they also made strengthening gruels and drinks, as well as from the *cacao* or chocolate bean, and the *chia*, both which are native to this country and were unknown in Europe till after the Conquest. Their seasonings were salt, made from the water of Lake Tezcoco and from salt-springs, peppers, and *tomate* — tomatoes. They made wine from the *maguey*, or Mexican aloes, — the famous "*pulque*," — and other

beverages from the corn, the mountain-palm, and other plants.

So we may see, that, though they did not possess a great variety, yet they utilized all that their country afforded. Eggs they had from the turkeys, iguanas, turtles, and perhaps the alligators; their meats were the flesh of quail and other native birds, rabbits, deer, and wild hogs, or peccaries. Having no beasts of burden, they trained their children to carry heavy loads over great distances, which they do even now, surpassing every other people in respect to endurance and strength. It is said that they had not found out how to make candles from wax, and as they had no sheep they could not obtain tallow; but in the coast countries they made use of those luminous coleoptera called fire-flies, and in the uplands torches of *ocotl*, or resinous pine-wood, to give them light at night. The habits of the people were very simple, and as they usually rose with the sun and retired at dark, they had little need for artificial light.

Every house had its idol, before which they daily burned incense of gum copal, which is a spontaneous product of the country. After laboring a little while in the morning, the poorer people had their frugal breakfast of *tortillas*, or *atolli* — maize gruel, which meal they repeated in the afternoon. They ate sparingly, but drank frequently, and the nobility enjoyed a siesta after their meals, soothing themselves to sleep by the aid of *tobacco*, which they smoked through a little pipe of wood, or a reed, mixed with the leaves of the liquidamber.

Finally, in a list of the vegetable productions that ministered to the wants of the Mexicans, should not be forgetten a singular fruit and a root that provided them with soap. The root, called the *amolli*, possessed excellent cleansing properties, not only when used upon the person but upon cotton and linen.



MAKING BREAD.

We have glanced over the Aztecs and their surroundings; to complete the picture we need to be informed upon their household economy, one or two arts, and their architecture. Their houses, even those of the nobles, were not furnished with a great variety of furniture. The beds of the poor were coarse mats of rushes, spread upon the floor, while those of the higher classes were finer in quality and used in greater quantity, covered with sheets of cotton, or linen woven with feathers; the pillows of the poor were logs of wood, or stones, those of the rich were probably of cotton, while quilts of cotton and feathers covered them at night. For chairs they had low seats carved of wood, or heaps of rushes or palm leaves, and at their meals they spread a mat upon the ground, instead of using a table, and "used napkins, plates, porringers, earthen pots, jugs, and other vessels of fine clay, but not, as we can discover, either knives or forks." No household was complete without the *metatl*, or stone corn-mill, the chocolate jug, and the *Xicallis*, or vessels made from gourds or calabashes.

The houses themselves, the dwellings of the Mexicans, were at first simple huts of reeds and rushes, and later on were made of sun-dried brick or stone and mud, with a thatching of grass, palm leaves, or the long, thick leaves of the maguey. As the city of Mexico improved, the houses of the lords and nobles were built of *tezontli*, a rough, porous stone that was easily worked and laid with lime. They were generally constructed in two stories, with halls and large courts, with a door opening to the street and another to the canal. The roofs were flat and terraced, the floors and pavements were of plaster or cement, and the walls covered with plaster so white and glistening as to shine like silver in the sun. Battlements and turrets adorned and defended the walls of some, fountains were enclosed in their courts and gardens, and fish-ponds were

numerous and well laid out. They had no doors, but mats were hung in their place, with shells, broken pottery, or some such thing hung to them to warn the family, by their jingling, of the entrance of any one. It was not customary, however, for any one not a member of the family to enter another's house, and the laws against thieves were so strict that there was little danger from stealing. Conspicuous examples of their skill in architecture will be pointed out when we return to the city of Mexico in the ranks of the conquerors. Let us speak of two great achievements of this people, then we will take up the thread of historical events again.

Their *calendar system* was so nearly perfect as to excite the highest admiration. It has already been alluded to. Their great "calendar stone," by aid of which they calculated the recurrence of their cycles and the return of their festivals, may yet be seen in the city of Mexico, where it is cemented into the western wall of the great cathedral; which position it has occupied since 1790, though its antiquity is much greater than that. It is said to weigh forty-five tons, is eleven feet in diameter, and was hewn from a great basaltic rock.

The most wonderful accomplishment of the Mexicans is yet to be mentioned — their celebrated *picture-writing*. It is thought that this art of representing historical events by means of paintings was an invention of the Toltecs. It is by means of them that their early history, as given in previous pages, has been preserved. Thousands of them were destroyed by the first Spanish missionaries to Mexico, as "works of the devil," but a sufficient number were hidden from them, and afterwards discovered and preserved, to be of service in constructing the aboriginal history. Besides the picture-paintings, proper, they had also a system of hieroglyphs, they could count up to any required number, and each

numeral was represented by a different character, and each city giving tribute to the crown; and not only material things, but abstract ideas had their particular characters.

Having, in these latter pages, given a description of Aztec life, customs, character, and accomplishments, we shall be prepared to pursue the history of this people through a period subsequent to the arrival of the Spanish adventurers in the Gulf of Mexico.



CACTI.

II.

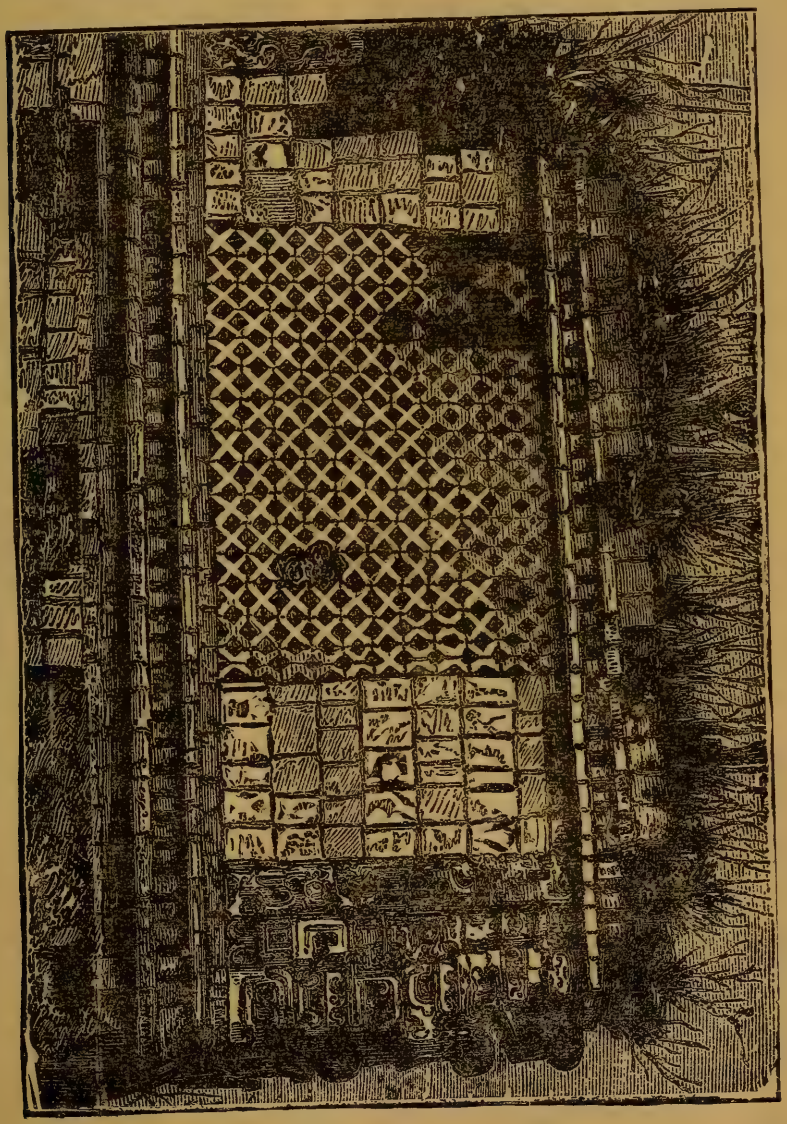
THE PERIOD OF THE CONQUEST.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE "DISCOVERY" OF MEXICO.

[A. D. 1517.] TWENTY-FIVE years after the discovery of the New World, the first European vessel that ever landed on the shores of Mexico struck keel against the coral rocks of Yucatan. Though Columbus heard of Yucatan in 1502, and Pinzon and Solis sighted its coast in 1506, circumstances unexplained had set them sailing southward and eastward without making a landing. In 1511 Cuba, which had been discovered in 1492 by Columbus, was colonized, and in a few years her enterprising governor, *Velasquez*, aided in fitting out small expeditions for discovery in other directions. The first of these was that of Francisco *Hernandez de Cordova*, equipped mainly at his own expense, and consisting of one hundred and ten soldiers, in three small vessels. They were guided by the famous pilot *Alaminos*, who had sailed when a youth with the great admiral. After several days they descried land at the northernmost point of Yucatan, which they called Point *Cotoche*. Drawing nearer shore they saw great buildings of stone, whitened with lime, and shining in the sun. Some of the natives came off to them, Indians far superior to those of the West Indies, even excelling the intelligent

inhabitants of Cuba in appearance. They were clothed in cotton garments, possessed bows, arrows, shields, spears,



YUCATAN RUINS.

and darts of a superior quality, and approached the vessels fearlessly in canoes large enough to contain fifty men each.

Returning the next day the captain of the Indians invited the Spaniards on shore, and leading them into an ambuscade wounded several of them. The Spaniards, however, gave them a taste of their sharp swords and killed fifteen. Meanwhile, during the fight, a vagabond priest whom they had brought along with them sacked a temple, and brought off several wooden chests which contained stone idols, various vessels, three diadems, and some images of birds and fishes in alloyed gold. This was their only consolation during the entire trip, for after that they had nothing but fighting. They wondered at the great stone buildings, as the first of the kind they had seen in America, and at the fierceness of the inhabitants of Yucatan, who resembled in this respect the West Indian Caribs. Sailing southward, skirting the western coast of Yucatan, they landed at a place called Campeche, where they saw more temples of stone, filled with hideous idols in the shape of serpents. The natives assembled in great numbers, and their chief asked of them, by signs, if they came from the East, probably having in mind the legend of the "Feathered Serpent." Then their priests, dressed in robes of white cotton, their long hair clotted with blood, rushed out of a temple, kindled a fire of grass and faggots, and fumigating the Spaniards with the incense of the native gums, indicated by signs that if they were not well off their shores before the fire had gone out, their warriors would attack and destroy them.

Well had it been for Cordova and his soldiers had they taken this advice and returned to Cuba. Escaping from this place unharmed they were driven by lack of water to go on shore below Campeche. They landed at an Indian town called *Champotan*, where, while they were sinking wells, they were attacked by Indian warriors, armed with shields and two-handed swords, their bodies protected by



MAP OF YUCATAN.

defensive armor of quilted cotton, their faces painted black, white, and red, and with plumes of feathers in their hair. They were the fiercest Indians the Spaniards had yet encountered; they fought bravely, and though they for the first time heard the report of firearms and witnessed their destructive effects, they finally drove the Spaniards to their boats, with the loss of half their number in killed, and every one of them wounded but one. Then, indeed, were the Spaniards glad to set sail for Cuba, first making for the coast of Florida for water, for they were perishing of thirst. Brave Captain Cordova had received no less than twelve serious wounds from arrows, from the effects of which he died a few days after reaching Cuba. They found water on the coast of Florida, where they touched, but while engaged in refreshing themselves and in washing their wounds they were set upon by savages, and the only man who escaped from Champotan without a hurt was killed or carried into captivity. In pitiable state, with only two vessels, and these in a sinking condition, they at last reached Cuba with their dying captain, and the members of the expedition scattered to their various plantations, most of them having had enough of western exploration; but the fame of their discovery got noised about the island, and incited others to follow in the track they had taken.

VOYAGE OF JUAN DE GRIJALVA.

[A. D. 1518.] The avarice of the Governor of Cuba being excited at the sight of gold, and by the assertions of two Indian captives that the land abounded in it, he fitted out four ships, and placed them in command of a discreet young man named Juan de Grijalva. Two hundred and forty volunteers were in readiness to accompany him, among whom were several of the last party of the unfortunate Cordova. Chief among these was the skillful pilot

Alaminos, and a young soldier named *Bernal Diaz*, who was one of the conquerors of Mexico, and who, fifty years later, wrote the best account of the Conquest that has ever been given to the world. Driven by the currents farther southward than were the vessels of Cordova, those of Grijalva first made land at the island of *Cozumel*. Here they found a good harbor, and soon reconciled the inhabitants, who had fled at the sight of the vessels.

With what astonishment must these simple Indians have regarded the great white-winged canoes that came to them from an unknown country, full of bearded men clad in strange garments and with such terrible weapons in their hands!

They had left Cuba on the third of April, 1518, and reached this island of Cozumel eighteen days later. After having made presents to the inhabitants, and having found that there were here great quantities of vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, hives of honey, and great droves of wild hogs, or *peccaries*, they set sail down the coast. Arrived at Champotan, they attacked and defeated the Indians gathered here (which was an easy matter with their large force and by the assistance of guns placed in the bows of their boats). They were greatly annoyed, during the fight, by clouds of locusts, which flew against their faces with such force that they hardly knew which to put up their shields against, arrows or insects. The coast below was entirely uninhabited, but they found the forests filled with game, especially deer and rabbits, some of which they captured by the aid of a greyhound, which dog wandered into the woods and was left behind. After passing a deep sound, which they named *Boca de Terminos*, they finally arrived at the mouth of the river Tabasco, which is sometimes called — and with reason — the "River Grijalva," after the brave captain who discovered it.

As they approached the shore, they heard the sound of falling timber, which indicated that the *Tabascans* were making preparations for defence; but by the wise policy of Grijalva the chiefs were brought to a peaceful consultation, and, though in great force, they received the Spaniards kindly. They brought them a great quantity of provisions, such as boiled fish, fowls, fruit, and maize bread, and what little gold they possessed, in the shape of golden lizards and birds, and three golden necklaces, not of very great value. The great object of the Spaniards, in all their expeditions, being the discovery of the precious metals, at whatever cost of life or labor to the Indians, they inquired eagerly where it could be obtained. They were told that away in the interior, a long ways off to the west, was a country called *Acolhua*, or *Mexico*, where there was a great abundance of gold.

[A.D. 1518.] This was the *first intimation* the Spaniards ever had of *Mexico;* a fact it would be well to bear in mind in its connection with subsequent events.

The Spaniards had with them the two Indians captured on the expedition of Cordova the year previous, who served as interpreters up to this point. These young men had been baptized, and christened Julian and Melchor. They had also taken off an Indian woman of Jamaica, whom they had found at Cozumel, whither she had been driven in a boat by the currents, and where her husband and companions had been sacrificed.

We may well believe that the imaginations of Grijalva and his followers were all aflame as they coasted this new country, as virgin and unexplored as was Cuba when discovered by Columbus, twenty-five years previously. At the river *Goazcoalcos* they saw Indians with shields of tortoise-shell, which, flashing back the sun from their polished surfaces, they took to be of gold. Indians came down

to the shore and waved white flags to them as signals to land; perhaps embassadors of Montezuma, who were already on the watch for the white strangers. This was at the River of Banners; they landed and bartered with them, giving them worthless glass beads for precious gold. They were, without doubt, officers of Montezuma, these Indians with the white flags, who had heard of the great battle at Champotan the year previous, and had posted sentinels on the watch all along the Gulf coast. By referring to Chapter X. you may ascertain the condition of things in the Mexican empire, and learn of the superstitions that caused Montezuma to receive these vagabond Spaniards with gifts worthy royalty itself, when he should have exerted all his power to crush them completely. Calling to mind the legend of *Quetzalcoatl*, and the strong effect the signs and omens had upon the minds of the Mexicans, you will see that these ships of Grijalva's were supposed by them to contain messengers from the great "Feathered Serpent" himself, who was now coming from the East to resume his charge of the Mexican kingdom.

Landing at this place, the soldiers of Grijalva found the embassadors of Montezuma reclining under some trees, well supplied with provisions of bread, fruit, and fowls. So eager were they to trade and to get objects of the Spaniards to send to their sovereign, that for a small quantity of cut-glass and beads they gave gold to the value of over fifteen thousand crowns! As before had been done, an account of this arrival of the ships was transmitted to Montezuma by his agents, painted on cloth, and served to add fresh fuel to his fears.

At a point on the coast where is now the city of *Vera Cruz* Grijalva landed his men, and remained for quite a while. Here they found evidences of that accursed idolatry of the Mexicans, for on a small island in the bay they

discovered a temple of stone containing an image of the Mexican god, *Tezcatlipoca*, and the remains of two boys who had been sacrificed the day before. Four Indian priests met them as they landed on the island, and undertook to fumigate them with incense, as was the custom whenever they had landed in Yucatan. Another small island, where the walls and altars of a temple were stained with the blood of sacrifice, they called *Isla de los Sacrificios*, or Island of Sacrifices; and the one nearest the shore, as it was told them that the sacrifices there had been done by order of the Indians of *Colhua*, they called *Ulua*, and afterwards St. John de Ulua. The fortress that guards the harbor of the city of Vera Cruz is built upon this island.

No more Indians coming to trade, and the mosquitoes being "very importunate," Juan de Grijalva sent the soldier *Alvarado* back to Cuba in one of the vessels, with the sick and wounded of the company, and all the gold he had got, while he with the three other vessels kept on as far north as the river *Panuco*. At the mouth of one of the rivers they met with some very valiant Indians, who nearly succeeded in capturing their smallest vessel, and a little beyond this point, finding nothing further of value or interest, they turned about and retraced their route to Cuba.

In the province of Goazcoalcos they found some more gold, and here the soldiers nearly went wild over the extraordinary bargains they were making with the Indians for their golden hatchets. Every Indian had a little hatchet of a golden hue, which he carried about with him, and readily parted with for a few glass beads. More than six hundred were obtained by the company, and every man fancied himself rich; but when they had arrived in Cuba it was found that these supposed treasures were almost worthless, as they were all of *copper!* The Gov-

ernor of Cuba, Velasquez, could not be other than well pleased at the success of Grijalva's expedition, for he brought back gold to the amount of twenty thousand crowns; yet he pretended to blame this most generous and upright of all the explorers because he had not planted a colony. In his next expedition, which was nearly fitted out at the time of Grijalva's return, he neglected the claims of this intrepid young man, and bestowed the command upon another — greatly to his cost, as we shall later see.

CHAPTER XIV.

VOYAGE OF HERNANDO CORTEZ.

In the year 1504 there came to the West Indies a young man, then about nineteen years of age, by the name of *Cortez*. He was well received in the island of Hispaniola (Haiti), as the governor, Ovando, was from his own native province of Estremadura in Spain, and he was assigned the clerkship of a small town and an *encomienda* of Indians. In 1511, when Velasquez sailed over to Cuba, and completed the conquest of that island, Hernando Cortez, now a man of some importance, went with him. There he acquired land and Indians, and grew wealthy, devoting himself to the cultivation of his plantation and the raising of stock.

[A.D. 1518.] And it so happened, that when, in the year 1518, Governor Velasquez looked about him for a commander for his third expedition to Mexico, the name of Cortez was brought prominently before him. These two gentlemen had previously quarrelled (about an affair which does not particularly concern this history), but were now reconciled, and Velasquez considered favorably the proposition, made by a friend of Cortez, that he should have the command. Imperious, as well as ambitious, the governor had taken offence at the doings of the brave and discreet Grijalva, who had the strongest claims upon his consideration, and abandoned him for this man, Cortez, who was soon to cause him to repent this folly, and to consume his heart in rage and shame. Knowing that the governor

would shortly become suspicious of him, Cortez, as soon as appointed, made all haste to get on his voyage. "Nothing was to be seen or spoken of," says one of the conquerors, "but selling lands to purchase arms and horses, quilting coats of mail, making bread, and salting pork, for sea stores." Volunteers flocked to his standard from every direction, and after visiting various points on the island, and securing all the available recruits and provisions, Cor-



CORTEZ.

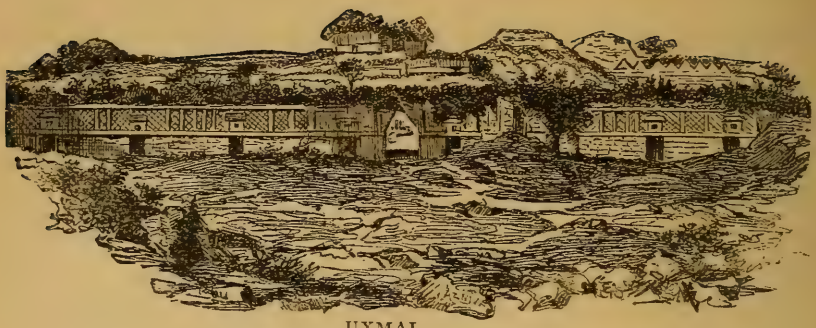
tez evaded the officers despatched to arrest him by the now jealous Velasquez, and put to sea, taking his final departure from the port of Havana on the tenth day of February, 1519.

[A.D. 1519.] After a rough passage, the fleet arrived at the island of Cozumel, and here, says one old chronicler, "Cortez now began to take the command upon him in earnest, and our Lord was pleased to give him grace, that whatever he undertook he succeeded in."

Here he ordered a review of the troops, being now be-

yond the reach of Velasquez, and having bidden a final adieu to Cuba. He found himself in command of eleven vessels, five hundred and eight soldiers, one hundred and ten sailors, sixteen horses, thirty-two crossbow men, and thirteen musketeers. As ordnance, he had ten brass cannon, and four falconets, with a large quantity of powder and ball. He appointed a brave soldier who had served in Italy, Francis de Orosco, as captain of artillery, and Alaminos as chief pilot. He divided his men into eleven companies, under the command of captains, nearly all of whom became famous in the subsequent march through Mexico. As we shall meet with most of them again, let us see what were the names of these men who followed the standard of Cortez. There was Alonzo Hernandez Puerto Carrero, who took the first ship from Mexico to Spain; Alonzo de Avila, James de Ordas, Francis de Montejo, Francis de Morla, Francis de Sancedo, John de Escalante, John Velasquez de Leon, Cristobal de Olid, and the brothers Alvarado, chief among whom was the famous, or *infamous*, Pedro de Alvarado. One of the conquerors, in his narrative, justly gives a portion of his pages to a detailed description of the *horses*, which, being the first ever landed on the soil of Mexico, aided more than anything else in striking terror into the breasts of the Indians.

Cortez had already surrounded himself with much state and ceremony, and had caused a standard to be made of gold and velvet, on which was a red cross, embroidered in the midst of white and blue flames, and underneath was the motto, in Latin, "*Let us follow the Cross, and in that sign we shall conquer.*" If we will bear this emblem in mind, we shall see that throughout his long career of conquest Cortez was faithful in his devotion to that sign of the cross. Even to the wondering, innocent natives, he offered the alternative, the *cross* or the *sword;* and he gave them *both*.



UXMAL.

Pedro de Alvarado's vessel arrived first at Cozumel, that beautiful island on the coast of Yucatan, and that unscrupulous adventurer immediately plundered the inhabitants and drove them into the woods. Cortez, when he arrived, reprimanded him for this, and for sacking the temples, and sent out to induce the people to return, who soon came back and mingled unsuspiciously with the soldiers.

There was a temple here, and a large and very hideous idol, before which the priests in charge burned incense and bowed down in devotion. The island was considered a holy place, even by the inhabitants of the mainland, who came to it in great processions, as to a holy shrine. Cortez, seeing this, determined to convert the natives to the true faith by *changing their gods*, substituting the cross and the virgin for the hideous idols. At first, the people objected, telling him their gods had always been very good to them, sending rain when it was needed, and crops of corn to the people of Yucatan, who came over and offered gifts at their altars. But Cortez disregarded their prayers and predictions of disaster, and cast down the idols, telling them they were evil things, and that they would draw their souls down to hell, and if they wished to remain as brothers to the Spaniards they must "place in their stead the crucifix of our Lord, by whose assistance they would obtain good harvests and the salvation of their

souls; with many other good and holy reasons, which he expressed very well." Lime was sent for, the Indian masons constructed an altar, and the Spanish carpenters a crucifix, which was erected in a small chapel (the ruins of which, it is said, yet remain). Then the "very reverend father," Juan Diaz, preached an excellent discourse, which, as it was in Spanish (a language the natives had never listened to before in their lives), was received "with great attention, and profit to their souls." Thus was a whole village of pagans converted into good Christians in a single day, — the natives reasoned that, as the Spaniards were stronger than they, and evidently favored by unseen powers, their god must be more powerful than theirs, and so they accepted the Spanish images with joy, carefully swept the temple, and attended upon the virgin.

As a curious circumstance, it is related that the Spaniards found these people, not only at Cozumel, but at various other points in this new territory, possessed of figures of the *cross*. From this the Spanish ecclesiasts have reasoned that these Indians were visited by Saint Thomas, during the wanderings of that revered person on earth, and received from him this emblem of the cross; but of this event the Indians have preserved no tradition.

One more allusion to the doings of the Spaniards here, and then we have done with Cozumel. Cortez often pondered over a question the natives oft repeated to his soldiers, when, pointing to the east, they would say "*Castilian*," as much as to ask if they were Castilians, or Spaniards. At last, after much inquiry, he heard, through his interpreter Julian — Melchor having died — that there were two Spaniards confined in the interior as captives. They had been cast upon the eastern shore of Yucatan, their vessels wrecked, and all their companions sacrificed save they two. Learning this, Cortez despatched a letter

to them by an Indian runner (who hid it in his hair, having to pass through an enemy's country), and a quantity of beads as a ransom from their masters. The letter was as follows: "Gentlemen and brothers,—Here in Cozumel I have been informed that you are detained prisoners by a cacique: I request as a favor that you will forthwith join me. I send a ship and soldiers, with whatever is necessary for your ransom, they have orders to wait eight days; but come with all dispatch to me, from whom you shall receive every assistance and protection. I am here with eleven ships and five hundred soldiers, with which I will, with the assistance of God, proceed to Champotan, Tabasco, and beyond."

Those two captives were named Aguilar and Guerrero. The master of the former received the ransom joyfully and set him free; but the latter was already married to an Indian woman, had three sons and was a great cacique and captain in their wars. Indeed, it is said that he conducted that bloody fight against Cordova, at Champotan. He was afraid to return to the Spaniards; and, moreover, his face was scarred and his ears and nose bored, after the Indian fashion.

"What would the Spaniards think of me," he said to Aguilar, "if I went back among them? Behold these three beautiful boys; I beseech you give me for them some of these green beads, and say that my brother sent them as a present to me from my own country." Then his wife joined in and abused Aguilar for wishing her husband to leave his family, and the poor fellow was only too glad to go on to the coast alone.

When he reached the coast the boat that had been left behind for him had departed. To his great joy, however, the fleet was obliged to put back to Cozumel, one of the vessels having sprung a leak, and he got into a canoe and

paddled across the channel to the island, where he met them. He had been so long in captivity that he could not be distinguished from the Indians who had come with him, and at first could only utter a few Spanish words, such as *Dios* (God) and Santa Maria. He had only a few rags about his waist, an oar in his hand, and the remains of an old book of prayers tied up in a bundle on his shoulder. When he came into the presence of the company he squatted on his hams, like the Indians, and every one was looking in vain for the Spaniard, when in answer to an inquiry he said, "Here he is," and was received with gladness, clothed and fed. He was subsequently of the utmost service to the Spaniards, being for a while their only means of communication with the natives. Cortez was not mistaken in the value he set upon such an acquisition, nor in having delayed the fleet in order to secure him.

As the fleet arrived off Champotan, a boat was sent ashore, and there they were welcomed by the greyhound that had been accidentally left there the year before by Grijalva. On the 13th of March they arrived off the mouth of the river Tabasco, or Grijalva, one of the largest that flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Knowing that the larger vessels could not approach near land, Cortez sent a large body of troops in boats to land about half a league from the town of Tabasco. The Tabascans, who had before received Grijalva so hospitably, had been reproached by their neighbors, the Champotanese (and perhaps incited by messengers from Montezuma), with cowardice in not attacking these strangers on their first visit. At all events, Cortez found his advance obstructed by above twelve thousand armed Indians in canoes. They threatened the Spaniards with death if they persisted in their intention of visiting their town, which they had fortified with palisades. Cortez then, displaying the policy for which he was always

noted, requested permission, through the new interpreter Aguilar, to land to procure wood and water, and to speak with their caciques, to whom he had "matters of the greatest importance, and of a *holy nature*, to communicate; but to this they only replied in the same manner as before."

The next morning, after mass, Cortez approached to land his men, when the enemy in canoes sallied out from the mangroves along the banks in prodigious numbers and making a fearful din with their horns and trumepts. Seeing this, Cortez ordered a halt, and then, demanding the Indians to give their attention, he caused the royal notary to read a requisition for them to supply the Spaniards with wood and water and to lay down their arms and become good Christians, and to allow the priests to land and speak to them concerning the service of God. If they should refuse this reasonable request, which was made in the king's name, then they would be responsible for all the mischief that resulted. This was read in Spanish and amidst the din and tumult of the horns and timbrels, so that it is possible that the Indians heard nothing of it, and if they did certainly did not understand a word. But it mattered not to Cortez, he had complied with the law, he was not fighting to please the Indians so much as to justify himself as an apostle of the faith in the eyes of the king and prelates in Spain. The old historian seemed astonished that the Indians paid no attention to this royal and ecclesiastical mandate. "All this," he says, "being duly explained to them, *produced no effect;* they seemed as determined to oppose us as they were before." Having satisfied his conscience in this way, and having in this manner thrown all the blame of the affair upon the ignorant Indians, Cortez then unfurled his banner, with its cheerful emblem of torment, the blue and white flames, and ordered his soldiers to "at them, and show the unchristian dogs no mercy."

You may be very sure that he and his soldiers were very much provoked at the obduracy of these heathens, who so ungratefully refused his generous offer of a new king, whom they had never heard of, to rule over them. And how indignant these pious soldiers must have been at such heretics who scorned their offer of new images to worship in place of their old ones, and added insult to injury by telling them that their old gods were good enough for them, and they only wished the Spaniards would sail away and leave them in peace! This, in the eyes of the horror-stricken priests, was blasphemy of the worst nature; these holy men washed their hands of such impious wretches, and adjured the soldiers to do their best to wipe them from the face of the earth. And they did! Though the Tabascans fought valiantly, attacking them with arrows and lances, yet they were gradually driven back, until the Spaniards were in possession of their town. They defended barricade after barricade, whistling and shouting to one another — *al calachioni* — "kill the captain," well knowing the disastrous effect such a result would have upon the strangers. They left many dead upon the field, but never turned their backs upon the enemy, retreating face to the foe, until their town, and temples, and idols, were finally captured.

When the town was gained, Cortez took possession of the country in the name of his majesty, the King of Spain, — a disreputable monarch of a country thousands of miles away, whom the Tabascans had never heard of. And making three cuts with his sword in a great silk-cotton tree, the commander claimed the whole country for his sovereign, saying that, against any one who denied this claim, he was ready to defend it with the sword and shield he then held. Nobody offered any objection, because the soldiers believed as he did: that the land belonged to them and the king

they served; and the poor Indians, strange to say, did not understand that the making of three sword-cuts in a *ceiba* tree gave these strangers a clear right and title to the country they and their ancestors had held from time immemorial! Being brave men, they resolved to resent this intrusion of an armed force into their territory, and on the morrow a terrible battle ensued. Seeing that the Indians were likely to press them hard, if not indeed drive them to their ships, Cortez ordered out the horses. These animals were very stiff from their long confinement on board the vessels, but in the course of the day they recovered their spirits and agility. Each one was furnished with a breastplate with bells hanging to it, and they were given to the best horsemen in the army. Marching out upon a plain beyond the town, the Spanish army saw a great host in front of them, sounding horns and trumpets, with plumes on their heads, their faces painted in red, white, and black, defended by quilted-cotton breastplates and shields, and armed with two-handed swords, darts, and slings. They fell upon the Spaniards with such fury that soon seventy of them were wounded and two of them killed. Nor were they deterred by the sharp swords of their enemy, which made such terrible wounds in their naked bodies, nor by the crossbows, and musketry and cannon, though they had never heard the thunder of these dreadful weapons before in their lives. Brave men, were these Indians of Tabasco, as indeed were all the Indians of that country of Mexico. Though believing that those black-mouthed cannon, which spit at them smoke and fire, and tore such awful gaps in their crowded ranks, were engines of destruction sent by the deities of another world, they valiantly stood their ground. At every discharge they threw up straw and dust to hide their terrible losses, and shouted back defiance. It would have fared hard with the invaders if the cavalry

had not come to their relief, and Cortez and his little squadron come charging down upon the Indians. It was the first time these Indians had ever seen a horse, and when those great animals, larger than any that roamed their forests, came thundering down upon them, they gave one great shout of terror and amazement and fled in wild disorder. They believed, as they afterwards stated, that horse and rider were one animal, and sent by the avenging deities to complete their destruction.

What wonder that they fled! Fancy ourselves in their position, battling at fearful odds against an army encased in mail and armed with the powers of thunder and lightning; while every nerve is strained, and every energy called into play against this strong enemy, suddenly another appears, a strange beast, a *centaur*, clad in steel and breathing death upon all within its reach! Think you we should not use great expedition in getting beyond its reach? Eight hundred of the Indian army lay dead upon the field, and a still greater number dragged their mutilated bodies away to perish in the seclusion of the forest! In this manner did Cortez punish these wicked people for resisting the embassadors of a king they did not know, and for refusing a religion they did not understand! They came in humbly, the chiefs with their followers, and craved pardon for their temerity in having tried to defend their homes from assassins and thieves, their wives from dishonor, their children from slavery! They begged permission to bury their dead, so that the wild beasts should not devour them, and bringing abundance of provisions, promised to become obedient vassals of the new king.

Cortez, says one of the historians of that time, "assumed a grave countenance, told them they deserved death for their neglect of our former offers of peace, but that our great monarch, Don Carlos, had enjoined us to favor

them so far as they should deserve it; and in case of their adopting a bad line of conduct, they should again feel the effect of our vengeance." Then followed another of those wholesale conversions; the Indians renounced their idols, and were received into the bosom of the holy Catholic church. And thenceforth they were to be under the loving care of the priests, and the cherished children of the King of Spain; in return for which they were only called upon to give the priests and soldiers all their property, all their gold, all their handsome maidens, all their strong young men. The Spaniards had found them freemen, living happily in their primitive villages in the forest; they left them slaves, stripped of all possessions, bleeding from a thousand wounds, and lamenting a thousand deaths.

It has been said by at least one historian that the Spaniards were assisted by *one of the saints* that day, the warlike apostle St. James, who rode a dappled horse, and charged the unregenerate heathen right valiantly. If this be true, it should but increase our sympathy for the poor Indians, for what with the cannon, horse, and musketry of the Spaniards, the odds were sufficiently against them without the intervention of apostolic aid.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM TABASCO TO CEMPOALLA.

THROUGH the inscrutable workings of God's will, Cortez received at Tabasco, from a source wholly unexpected, a most important auxiliary to his force, without which indeed the conquest would have been impossible. To propitiate the Spaniards, and to obtain pardon of them for having defended their homes, the Tabascans gave them what gold and cotton cloth the province afforded; and further, seeing that the conquerors desired female servants, they presented the captains with twenty Indian women. These Cortez refused to receive until they had been baptized, and until the "reverend father, Bartolome Olmedo, had preached to them many good things touching our holy faith." Then these unfortunate Indian women, "the first Christian women in New Spain," were divided among the captains, Cortez retaining a young girl of noble birth, beauty, and great spirit, who was baptized under the name of Doña Marina. From this time to the end of the conquest, this noble girl accompanied Cortez on all his expeditions, serving as counsellor and interpreter, clinging to him with affection and love, though degraded by him to the lowest position woman can occupy in the eyes of the world. She was the daughter of a noble of Goazcoalcos, who died while she was very young and left her in charge of her mother. This inhuman parent married another noble, and they, having a son whom they wished to have their inheritance, sold the young girl to a party of slave traders on their way

to Tabasco. Thus, by a singular conjunction of circumstances, was a subject of the Mexican crown delivered into the possession of the Spaniards; one who contributed more than all their armies to its subjugation. Possessed of more than ordinary intelligence, she rapidly acquired the Spanish language, and as she spoke at the time of her joining the Spaniards the Mexican dialect and that of Tabasco, the Maya, she formed, with the rescued Aguilar, the link in the chain necessary to conversation with the Mexicans.

[A.D. 1519.] Leaving Tabasco on Palm Sunday, after a most solemn procession of the army, with music and song, the soldiers carrying palm branches, the fleet arrived at San Juan de Ulua on Holy Thursday; and here their sea voyage terminated. The next day the cavalry, infantry, and artillery were disembarked on the sand-hills, an altar was raised, and temporary barracks constructed for the troops. They had hardly dropped anchor when two large canoes came out to them, containing messengers from the governor of that province, offering them assistance if they needed it in the prosecution of their voyage. In communicating their message it was necessary to employ *three* languages and two interpreters; first, Doña Marina explained to Aguilar what the Mexicans said, translating it into the Maya tongue, and then Aguilar converted it into Spanish.

A day or two later two governors of that portion of the coast made their appearance, accompanied by a great train of attendants. By this time, with the assistance of the Indians, huts had been constructed for all the troops, and cannon planted to defend their first nucleus of a colony in New Spain.

They brought provisions and many things in gold and feathers. Cortez invited them to dine with him, and during the repast highly extolled his monarch, Don Carlos,

who, he said, was the mightiest in the world, and he demanded of the embassadors how soon he could march into the interior and deliver his embassy to their own king, Montezuma. The two Mexican lords were astonished, as well as offended, at the impudence of this audacious leader of a band of vagrants, that he should speak so lightly of his sacred majesty, Montezuma, and one of them, the lord *Teuhtlile*, haughtily replied: "How is this? You are but just arrived, and yet you talk of seeing our monarch. I have listened with pleasure to what you have told me concerning the grandeur and bounty of your sovereign; but, know ye, our king is not less bountiful and great. I rather wonder that there should exist another in the world more powerful than he; but as you assert it I will make it known to my sovereign, from whose goodness I trust that he will not only have pleasure in receiving intelligence of that great prince, but will likewise do honor to his embassador. Accept, in the meantime, this present which I offer you in his name." Thereupon, the Mexican lord presented Cortez with some beautifully wrought pieces of gold, ten loads of fine cotton mantles, and a great supply of provisions.

In return, — and how it disgusts one to read of the paltry baubles the Spaniards, these adventurers who boasted so loudly of the magnificence of their sovereign, sent in return, — Cortez gave the Mexican an old arm-chair, painted and carved, some glass beads and a crimson cap with a gold medal on it representing St. George killing the dragon! These, this impudent braggart, in a grandiloquent speech, begged the embassador he would present the great Montezuma in the name of the King of Spain, and at the same time request him to name a time when he could wait on him.

One of the soldiers had on a gilded helmet, which the embassador observed resembled one upon the head of

their idol, Huitzilopochtli, and requested permission to take it to the capital to show Montezuma. Cortez at once gave it to him, adding — with a meanness unparalleled in history — that it would be a capital thing if Montezuma would return it, *filled with gold*, that the Spaniards might be able to compare it with the gold of their own country, and also as an acceptable present to their emperor.

Lord *Teuhtlile* then took his departure, promising to return in a short time with Montezuma's reply, while the other lord, *Ciutlalpitoc*, remained, to keep the Spanish army supplied with provisions.

What was the state of affairs at the Mexican court during the while their eastern coasts were vexed with wars and rumors of wars and their vessels trafficking with strange beings from over the sea? By referring to the tenth chapter, (pp. 137–140) we shall recall to mind the demoralized condition of the people of Anahuac, and the consternation amongst their rulers at the coming of the winged ships and the bearded men. Upon the arrival of Juan de Grijalva, in the previous year, the governor of the coast province had sent immediate notice to the Aztec capital; they had caused hasty paintings to be made by their artists, of the boats and men, and had followed them to court with a more detailed descripton. Upon the reception of this alarming news, Montezuma had hastily assembled the two allied kings, Cacamatzin of Tezcoco, and Cuitlahuatzin lord of Iztapalapan. Long and anxiously they debated upon this mysterious visitation, and at last came to the unanimous conclusion that he who commanded this great army could be no other than *Quetzalcoatl*, god of the air — the "Plumed Serpent," who had, according to tradition, departed from their coast, ages ago, leaving behind him the promise to return and conclude the beneficent reign he had begun so happily in the time of the Toltecs.

Dominated by priestly superstitions, Montezuma was filled with a dread of the coming of this lord of the air, yet he devoutly believed in the truth of the tradition, and was ready to yield up his kingdom upon his arrival. Those kings held themselves to be but the viceroys of that deity and trustees of the crown, which they were to cede to him whenever he should make his appearance and demand it. The great size of the "winged canoes" of the Spaniards, the loud noise and destructive force of their artillery, so closely resembling the thunder-laden clouds of the air, all these things combined to awe them and inspire them with the belief that the god of the air had finally arrived. Having come to this determination, Montezuma ordered five persons of his court to hasten to the coast with a large and magnificent present for the supposed deity, and to offer him homage in his name and to congratulate him upon his safe, though long-deferred arrival. At the same time, he ordered sentinels to be placed upon the mountains overlooking the coast, with swift messengers to convey him tidings of the movements of the fleet.

Unfortunately for the Mexicans, the court embassadors, though they made every exertion, did not overtake Grijalva, who sailed northward as far as the river Panuco, and thence made passage for Cuba. *Unfortunately*, say we, because Grijalva was a humane man, whose desire for conquest, gold, and glory was tempered by a love of justice. We have every reason to believe that, had it fallen to his lot to have undertaken the subjugation of this Mexican empire, it would have been done without the shedding of blood and the sacrifice of life that attended the invasion of Cortez.

The embassy had returned to Anahuac, and those personages who had met Cortez were simply governors of the province, tributary to Montezuma. Before his departure from the coast, *Teuhtlile*, who had numerous painters with

him, divided the subject among them so that each one represented a different portion of the armament, and in this manner Montezuma received a description, perfect in every detail, of the wonders he was to relate to him. Desiring that they should omit nothing that would impress the emperor with the grandeur and power of his armament, Cortez ordered the cavalry to manœuvre upon the beach and the artillery to be fired. When they had somewhat recovered from the stupor of amazement into which the roar of the cannon and the crashing of the balls through the trees had thrown them, the painters set themselves diligently to work to represent this new wonder upon canvas. Then they departed, bearing the miserable present and the boastful message of Cortez to their expectant emperor.

After seven or eight days of waiting, the Spaniards saw a long procession of Indians filing down the sand dunes; there were the embassadors of Montezuma borne in litters upon the shoulders of attendants and upwards of one hundred men laden with rich presents for the Spaniards.

The distance from coast to capital, at the present day by rail, is two hundred and sixty miles; but doubtless the Aztecs had shorter paths by which their messengers travelled and the distance may have been two hundred miles. If we may believe the accounts related of the couriers of Montezuma, they were incredibly swift; along the line of travel were stations with relays of runners and by this means a message was borne along from post to post with the speed of the mail-coach of old. The story often told of Montezuma's receiving fish fresh from the Gulf every day, by means of these runners, may well be doubted, and is only believed in by those credulous authors who have never visited the country; but, it is doubtless true that news sped fast in those days, by the means above mentioned. Whether it was seven days later, or ten, it matters not; the embassa-

dors had returned and with them had brought such a present for the Spanish monarch, Don Carlos, as never before had passed from one hemisphere to another!

On their arrival they touched the ground with their hands, at the same time kissing them, and then fumigated the Spaniards with incense, calling them *Teteuctin* — lords or gentlemen. This, the customary mode of salutation of embassadors, caused the Spaniards to imagine they addressed them as gods — *Teules*, from *Teteo*, gods — when they had meant nothing of the kind, and gave these cut-throat adventurers an exalted opinion of their own importance.

With fine compliments, conveying from Montezuma his congratulations, and the pleasure he had received in learning of the arrival of such a brave body of men on his coast, the embassador begged Cortez to receive this present from his emperor, as a slight return for the very valuable (?) gifts he had sent him on the occasion of his first visit. Having delivered himself of a speech to this effect, consisting of long and high-sounding words — for diplomacy was a fine art at the court of Montezuma — the embassador caused some mantles to be spread upon the ground and the Indians to lay upon them their precious burdens. It may be justly imagined that the Spaniards gazed upon these treasures in open-mouthed astonishment. There were elegant works in gold and silver, gems, gold carved in the shape of various animals, bales of the finest cotton garments interwoven with bright feathers, bows and arrows, ten collars of fine gold, plumes of feathers cast in gold, *panaches* of green and gorgeous feathers, and numberless wrought and other figures in gold. The most glorious gifts were two great disks, as large as a cart-wheel, one of gold, representing the sun, the other of silver, having an engraved image of the moon. And last, there was the *helmet*, filled, — accord-

ing to the base suggestion of Cortez, — with glittering grains of gold, thought to be of the value alone of three thousand crowns! The intrinsic value of the golden wheel, without reference to its exquisite workmanship, was held to be more than twenty thousand crowns!

After these had been spread before Cortez, the Mexican made another short speech, in which he spoke of the pleasure it gave his king to contribute this portion of his treasure as a gift to their sovereign; at the same time, in the politest manner possible, he begged them to depart from the coast to the land whence they came, as soon as they had recovered from the fatigues of the voyage. Cortez was greatly rejoiced at the present, but mortified at this refusal of permission to visit the capital, still, he kept a pleasant countenance and told the embassador that he should insist upon his original intention of visiting Montezuma in person, and delivering him the message he pretended to have from his king. Then he gave in return for this magnificent tribute, which would have been a costly ransom for a king, *three holland shirts and a glass cup!*

How *Teuhtlile's* lip must have curled, and with what a sinking of the heart must he have reflected upon this waste of treasure, sent by his generous monarch to be cast before such swine as these!

He coldly promised to send the message to Montezuma, and at the end of a number of days brought his answer. He this time sent more gold, ten loads of mantles and four rare jewels like emeralds, each one of which was considered worth a load of gold!

This time the Aztec emperor's orders were peremptory, that the strangers should not be allowed to advance farther into the territory with his consent, and that all intercourse with them by the natives should be suspended. Montezuma's eyes were now open to the true

character of the invaders. Gods of the air no longer were they now to him. Intelligence must have reached him by this time of their cruel acts in Tabasco, of their insatiable lust, of their low-born manners and total lack of all generous feelings. These were not the attributes of gods, that they displayed!

Some of the Spanish writers would have us believe that Montezuma consulted his gods, making sacrifices to them of tender children, and they commanded him to repel the invaders. But it seems more probable that he now saw the error into which his superstition had led him, and if he still believed in the coming of *Quetzalcoatl*, he was now assured that the peace-loving god would not come in the guise of these bloody-minded adventurers. In his total ignorance of another country than that of Mexico and its contiguous territory, he was puzzled to explain their origin, and hence was easily led to accept the popular tradition. No, these were not the emissaries of the Feathered Serpent, of the Prince of Peace; he would have nothing further to do with them. Yet his generous nature — generous in great things, despite the fact that his treasure was accumulated through the oppressions of his suffering subjects — refused to let the strangers go without a show of hospitality, and a gift for that monarch they pretended had sent them on this mission. Hence it was that he would dismiss them loaded with favors, and that he would sever all connection between them and his subjects. Ill-fated, short-sighted monarch! He mistook the natures of the beings he was dealing with; he had thought them at least sensible to generous treatment, while they were in fact strangers to every sentiment of the kind! He had not reflected upon the consequences of such a display of the wealth of his kingdom upon these men whose god was gold, whose creed was as bloody as that of the Aztecs in their palmiest days.

In sending them this treasure he inflamed their bosoms with a common sentiment, an unquenchable desire to see more of this kingdom in the mountains and to put its inhabitants to the sword, that they might possess themselves of its wealth.

On to Mexico! was the cry that now passed from mouth to mouth of these brave, though unprincipled men.

The following day the Spaniards found themselves in a strait, for there was not an Indian remaining of all the thousands that had come to them for barter and had been busy supplying them with provisions. Their bread was mouldy, and their sailors were kept busy fishing in the bay to keep starvation from their doors. Why did not Montezuma pour down upon them at this time with the forces of his empire? It is very certain that had he done so he could have swept them out of existence, or have driven them from his coast in dismay. But Providence, says an an ancient historian, "preserved them to become the instruments of his views in that new world." "We do not mean," he adds, "to justify the design and conduct of the conquerors, but neither can we avoid tracing in the series of the conquest the destiny which prepared the ruin of that empire."

Indeed, if we will look back for a moment over the events that seemed to have contributed to the peculiar successes of Cortez we shall almost be tempted to accept these conclusions of that historian — that Cortez and his cut-throats were special instruments in the hands of Providence for the destruction of the empire. We have already seen that the country was vexed with unpropitious signs and omens, which had hardly disappeared from the sky when the news reached the Mexican court that Grijalva was upon the coast; this eminent navigator, by his kind and judicious treatment of the Indians,

strengthened the prevailing opinion that the next arrivals were in reality the children of the God of the air. By a most fortuitous accident the Spanish captive, Aguilar, was rescued from the Indians of Yucatan, and thus a means of communication opened with the Tabascans, and, through the wonderful acquisition of Marina, with the Mexicans themselves. A most astonishing series of circumstances had thus operated in his favor. Is it improbable that Cortez should have looked upon these events as special dispensations of the Almighty in his behalf?

Their provisions were low and of poor quality, the mosquitoes were pestering them night and day, thirty or forty of their number were sick from their wounds, and there was a strong party, the friends and relations of Velasquez in particular, who were anxious to return to Cuba, and tried to excite a mutiny against the authority of Cortez. But by putting some in irons, and pacifying others with gold, he won the majority over to his side, and they soon chose to remain and retain him as their general, independent of Velasquez. It would probably have been death to Cortez to return to Cuba at this time, for he had neither the favor of the governor nor of his sovereign. It was while these quarrels were going on among the Spaniards, snarling over their captures like wolves in a sheepfold, that another of those aids in the propulsion of the army towards the capital came to hand. Some Indians one day approached them, and stated that they were of a province subject to Montezuma, but that their cacique wished to throw off his allegiance and ally himself with the strangers. They were *Totonacs*, who, you will remember, were subjugated by the Aztecs not many years before — being among the last acquisitions by the Mexican crown. The cruelties and exactions of the Aztecs had turned their hearts from them, for they not only demanded tribute of

their wealth but a certain number of their children yearly to sacrifice on the altars of Anahuac. Intrigue was always welcome to the Spanish commander, and he promised them assistance in throwing off the Mexican yoke, and to shortly visit their town of *Cempoalla.* Meanwhile he found a better location for a settlement farther north, and there they removed with their ships and laid the foundations of a city, which they called *La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz* — the Rich City of the True Cross. This name is applied to the present city of Vera Cruz, which was subsequently removed to the situation it now occupies, at the point of the first landing, opposite the island of San Juan de Ulua. The first things they erected in the new city were a gallows and an altar; magistrates were created at the instigation of Cortez, to whom he resigned his command, but was immediately re-invested with it, in the *name of the king*, for whom this colony was now planted. In this way the cunning Cortez shook himself free from his dependence upon Velasquez.

Then the little army marched towards Cempoalla, which was several leagues from the coast; when within a league of the town they were met by some of the principal men, who presented the officers with fragrant flowers, and begged them to excuse their cacique from coming out to receive them, as he was so fat and unwieldy as to be unable to do so. He sent, however, an invitation for them to enter, which Cortez accepted with thanks.

This town being the first of any extent, built of hewn stone and plastered with lime, that the Spaniards entered, they were greatly astonished at what they saw there. One of the horsemen, having penetrated to the great square, came flying back at the top of his speed, and in great excitement, crying out that the walls of the public buildings were all of *silver!* But when the army entered the centre



VERA CRUZ.

of the town they found that these "silver walls" were only polished plaster glistening white in the sun. They were assigned quarters, the inhabitants of Cempoalla treating them to fruits and flowers, baskets of plums, and bread of corn. The town was so large, clean, and beautiful, with its white-walled dwellings and temples, its gardens and plantations, that the soldiers compared it with Seville, in Spain.

The cacique shortly waited on Cortez, dressed in rich mantles and ornaments of gold, and ordered a present to be made him of gold and mantles. It did not take long to find out that what the Indians had told them on the sands — that these people were tired of Montezuma's exactions — was perfectly true. The next day the army continued its march to the shore, to a point whither the vessels had preceded them, and the cacique furnished them with four hundred men of burden to carry their baggage. This, they had found, was a custom of the country: for every cacique through whose territory a stranger passed to furnish, without pay, sufficient men to convey his effects or merchandise a certain distance. At a town called *Chiahuitzla*, situated upon a steep and rocky hill, about three miles from the coast, the lord of that town and the lord of Cempoalla held conference with Cortez as to the advisability of throwing off the yoke of Montezuma. Just at this juncture there entered the town five Mexican nobles, tribute collectors for the king, who marched proudly by with a great retinue, with their noses in the air, not deigning to bestow even a glance upon Cortez and his soldiers. They were dressed in elegantly embroidered mantles and drawers, wore their hair gathered in a shining knot at the top of the head, and carried in their hands bunches of roses, "which they occasionally smelled to." The lords were struck with terror, and deserted Cortez, hastening to prepare lodgings and cups of chocolate for the royal tax

collectors. These nobles reprimanded them severely for holding intercourse with the Spaniards, after their great lord, Montezuma, had especially forbidden it, and demanded twenty men and women to be sent to Mexico and sacrificed in expiation of their offence.

The poor lords were in great trouble, so well they knew what Montezuma's displeasure meant; but at the instigation of Cortez they threw the officers into prison and whipped one that continued refractory. By this act they had openly committed themselves as rebels to Montezuma, which was just what the wily Cortez desired. Having got the poor chief into this dilemma, he secretly liberated the imprisoned officers, protesting that it was the Cempoallans that had done this, that he was their friend and that of their king, and sending them away with their ears full of lies and in the belief that he was greatly displeased with what had happened.

In the morning he manifested great displeasure at the guards who had allowed the prisoners to escape, and by his double dealing not only impressed the Totonacs with the idea that he was going to liberate them all from the thraldom of Montezuma, but the latter monarch with the belief that he was acting in his interests. In truth, while Cortez was stirring up rebellion and acquiring all the people of the coast provinces as allies, Montezuma sent him an embassy with a very rich present and thanks for his civility to his officers; but cautioning him to beware of the Totonacs, whom he would soon punish as they deserved. If he had but persisted in his original intention of sending a large army to wipe out the Spaniards, how different might have been the story of Mexico's history!

The fat cacique, desiring to cement the friendship now existing between the Spaniards and his people, desired to present Cortez and his officers with eight ladies, all of the

first families of the place, ornamented with gold collars and earrings and attended by female slaves. These, Cortez said he would accept if they would renounce their old religion and be baptized into that of the Spaniards. He went further even than this, and proposed to the cacique the entire destruction of his gods. The cacique and the priests objected and finally attempted to resist; but the Spaniards collected their forces, and about fifty of them rushed up the steps of the temple and hurled down the hideous idols contained therein. Then the priests, who had charge of the temple, were shorn of their long and blood-matted hair, and a cross and an image of the virgin being set up in place of the other idols, they were instructed in the new faith by the Reverend Father Olmedo. An old soldier, lame from wounds, was appointed to reside in the temple as a hermit; the priests were taught how to make wax candles, to be brought before the new image, and thus this people brought out from the darkness of idolatry into the light of a new religion. They were now firm allies of Cortez, for they had imprisoned the officers of Montezuma, and insulted his gods; the power of the strangers alone could prevent them from being exterminated.

CHAPTER XVI.

DESTRUCTION OF THE SHIPS AND MARCH INLAND.

BEFORE the overthrow of the idols, Cortez had taken measures for the founding of a city on the coast which should be a strong fortress to hold the Totonacs to their allegiance to him, a nucleus for a colony, a post of defence for any new troops that might arrive, and a place of refuge to which to retreat in case of need. It was built on a plain lying at the foot of the mountain of Chiahuitzla, about twelve miles north of Cempoalla.

The first vessel that ever sailed from Mexico to Spain direct left this port shortly after, in command of Captain Alonzo Puertocarrero and Francisco Montejo, on the sixteenth of July, 1519. It was sent by Cortez to carry letters to his king, asking that he be confirmed in his office of general and chief magistrate, and contained the gold, silver, gems and mantles, sent to him by Montezuma. Not only had Cortez succeeded, by bribes and flattery, in inducing the soldiers to relinquish their share of this great treasure for the king, but they had written a letter, praying that his royal highness would bestow upon their commander those honors which the Governor of Cuba, Velasquez, was entitled to by royal favor. After describing the country and people they had discovered, the battles they had fought, and the great service they were doing his majesty in bringing these idolatrous Indians to a knowledge of the true religion, the letters went on to state, "We are four hundred and fifty soldiers, surrounded by hosts of enemies,

and ready to lay down our lives for the service of God and his majesty; and we supplicate that his majesty will not bestow the government of so great and rich a country, which deserves to be ruled by a great prince or lord, upon any unworthy person."

Two days only after their agent had departed, a plot was formed among a few of the soldiers and sailors to seize one of the small vessels and escape to Cuba. It was discovered, two soldiers were immediately hanged, the feet of the pilot were cut off, and the sailors were given two hundred lashes each.

Foreseeing that this was but the first of what might prove a long list of desertions, Cortez came to the determination to prevent all such in the future by an act so bold and desperate as to compel the admiration of even his enemies. After secretly advising with his pilots and some of his soldiers he resolved to *destroy his ships*, and thus effectually prevent his men from leaving the enemy's country. This was done, the vessels were run on shore, the sails, anchors, rigging, etc., carefully housed in the port; and thus were five hundred men left without means of escape, in a country swarming with enemies whom they must conquer or perish in the attempt.

There is, says an English writer, "no equal to this act in history;" it stamps these adventurers as brave men, their leader as one to whom cowardice was a stranger; there was not a craven in the army.

Juan de Escalante, a valiant man, was left in charge of a small company, principally sailors converted into soldiers, who formed the garrison of the new city, while Cortez and the main army took up its march into the interior. Arrived again at Cempoalla, Cortez renewed his injunctions to the cacique to take good care of the cross and the image he had left in the temple, and recommending Escalante and

his companions to his protection, commenced his circuitous approach to the Mexican capital.

[A. D. 1519.] It was on the sixteenth of August that Cortez set out to leave the coast finally behind him. He had four hundred and fifteen Spanish infantry, sixteen horses, some Totonac troops, forty nobles of that province, and four hundred men of burden to carry the baggage and drag the artillery.

It was mentioned at the beginning of this book, that Mexico contained three well-defined *zones* of climate and vegetation, which one might pass through on his way from the coast to the great plateau where the Mexican capital was situated. Along the coast it is very hot, and the climate is tropical — this is the *tierra caliente*, or "hot country;" next, as you advance into the mountains, you enter the temperate country, the *tierra templada*, at an elevation above the sea of 3,000 to 4,000 feet; last, is the cold country — *tierra fria* — situated above an elevation of 7,000 feet. Through all these zones, with their varying types of vegetation and their changes of climate, the army of Cortez was to march on its way to the capital. With gladness, it may be presumed, they turned their backs upon the hot coast country, swarming with insects and stricken with fevers, and entered the hills that led up to the vine and forest-clad mountains of the *tierra templada*. On their second day's march they reached **Xalapa*, a place where there exists to-day a town of the same name — Jalapa — celebrated for its green valleys and oak-crowned hills. Beyond this region, still climbing, they entered the great plains, crossing some forbidding mountains, where the temperature was very cold, and the soldiers, and the Indians of the hot country — especially those of Cuba —

* X or J, before a vowel, always pronounced like *H*: *Halapa.*



RUINS OF PAPANTLA.

suffered severely. After suffering greatly from fatigue they arrived at a large city called *Xocotla*, which contained, among numerous buildings, thirteen temples and the cacique's palace of stone and lime, plastered, terraced and turreted. Here they heard further information of the capital of Mexico, as Montezuma kept at this place a great force of soldiers, and it was one of the strongest in that region. The cacique told Cortez that the Aztec capital was a city of great strength, being founded on an island, with no passage from one house to another except by boats and bridges; the Spaniards were also informed more positively and particularly of the immense wealth of Montezuma, which inflamed their lust for gold to that extent that they were ready to overcome every obstacle to obtain it. The cacique and the Spanish general each boasted to the other of the great power and grandeur of his sovereign; and Cortez foolishly demanded of the cacique, called *Olintetl*, gold to send to his king across the sea.

"I have enough of gold," replied Olintetl, "but cannot give it without the express orders of my king; but if he orders me, I will not only render up my gold and all my estate, but even my person."

"Then," said Cortez, "I will soon make him order you to give it and all that you have."

Here a difficulty presented itself as to the route to be chosen thence to Mexico. The chiefs of Xocotla recommended that passing through Cholula, as being all the way through Mexican territory; but their allies, the Totonacs, advised passing directly through *Tlascala*, because its people were enemies of the Mexicans and likely to welcome them in a friendly manner.

TLASCALA AND THE TLASCALLANS.

The republic of Tlascala, to which casual reference has already been made, lay nearly in the centre of Mexican territory, surrounded on all sides by hostile tribes. The capital city, Tlascala, was founded about a century previous to that of Mexico, and the inhabitants of this territory had maintained their independence from their first entrance into the Mexican valley, with the first tribes that settled about Lake Tezcoco, to the year of the Spanish invasion. War-like and courageous, they had resisted the encroachments of the Mexicans upon their territory, fighting so zealously in defence of their national honor that the Aztecs had never succeeded in subduing them. They were idolatrous, having essentially the same gods and religious system as the Mexicans; their arts were also the same, but their commerce restricted by their foes to corn and cochineal, two products of their country. From the abundance of corn on this elevated region amongst the mountains it has been called *Tlascalan, or the place of bread.* Ever fighting against the Mexicans, ever on the alert against surprise as they were, and successful in the defence of their homes, they had yet been unable to check Mexican progress, or to prevent themselves from being entirely surrounded and cut off from the sea. Hence, not strong enough to act more than on the defensive, they had been prohibited from trade with other nations, and had existed for many years without several articles that many people term the necessaries of life. It was in the time of King Axayacatl that the Tlascalan commerce with the maritime provinces was finally prohibited, and from that time the inhabitants grew accustomed to eat their food without salt, though it is said that the nobles had secret means of obtaining a supply for themselves.

The extent of the republic was about fifty miles by thirty; the region in which it was situated was elevated and swept by cold winds, and the soil produced little else than maize and *maguey*.

The Tlascallans were friendly to the Totonacs; that is, they were not at war with them, and they probably sympathized with them as conquered subjects of Montezuma, though unable to aid them.

Four of the Cempoallans were sent to the senate of Tlascala with a request that permission be granted the Spanish army to pass through their territory. The embassadors were received very politely, and in due time addressed the senate as follows: "Most great and valiant chiefs, may the gods prosper you and grant you victory over your enemies. The lord of Cempoalla, and all the nation of Totonacs, desire to acquaint you that from the quarters of the East there are arrived in our country in large ships certain bold and adventurous heroes, by the assistance of whom we are now freed from the tyrannical dominion of the King of Mexico. They acknowledge themselves the subjects of a powerful monarch, in whose name they come to visit you, to communicate intelligence to you of a true God, and to assist you against your ancient and inveterate enemy. Our nation, following the dictates of that strict friendship which has always subsisted between it and this republic, counsels you to receive those strangers as friends, who, though few in number, are equal in worth to many."

Tlascala was governed by four lords or chiefs, who composed the senate, and of these but one, *Maxacatzin*, seems to have been in favor of admitting the strangers. The others, led by the old chief, *Xicotencatl*, whose son was commander of the armies, counselled opposition to them from the very beginning. Maxacatzin had suggested that these were probably the messengers sent from the god of

the air, but the wise and sagacious Xicotencatl repelled this insinuation with scorn. "Those men," he said, "who demand entrance into our city appear to be rather monsters cast up by the sea, because it could not endure them in its waters, than gods descended from heaven, as some have vainly imagined. Is it possible they can be gods, *who so greedily covet gold and pleasures?* And what should we not dread from them in a country so poor as this, when we are even destitute of salt? He wrongs the honor of the nation



ROUTE OF CORTEZ.

who thinks it can be overcome by a handful of adventurers. *If they are mortal, the arms of the Tlascallans will tell it to all the regions round;* if they are immortal, there will always be time to appease their anger by homage, and to implore their mercy by repentance. Let their demand, therefore, be rejected; and if they dare enter by force, let our arms repel their temerity!"

After a long and stormy debate, it was decided finally to allow the strangers to enter, but at the same time to

have a large army in waiting to oppose their progress and try their strength. This army was placed in charge of a son of the old chief, Xicotencatl, of the same name, one whose bravery was equal to his skill as a general, and both had been tested in many a fight. "If we remain victors," said one of the senators, "we will do our arms immortal honor; if we are vanquished, we will accuse the Otomies — a nation on their borders — and charge them with having undertaken the war without our orders."

After waiting impatiently several days Cortez (the embassadors not returning) decided to advance. They had marched but a few leagues when they came to a kind of fortification in the shape of a high wall of stone, which, it was said, had been built around their territory by the Tlascallans to defend them from the Mexicans. There was but one narrow passage through it, and this, though generally guarded by the Otomies, allies of the Tlascallans, was now — when most in need of defenders — wholly unprotected.

After seriously regarding this menace in stone and mortar for a while, Cortez ordered his army on, knowing well that when that boundary should be passed he would be in the country of an enemy entitled to more respect than the weak troops of the coast. The Otomies, to whom had been entrusted the keeping of the pass, soon made their appearance in flying detachments, too late to prevent the entrance of the Spanish army, which they might have done at the wall, or have caused them fearful loss. Cortez ordered some of the cavalry to pursue and make them prisoners, when the reckless savages attacked them with such fury that their horses were severely wounded; they could take no prisoners, and so they killed five. This was the first blood shed on Tlascallan territory by order of Cortez, and it was enough to account for the subsequent hostility of the

Tlascallans themselves, without seeking for a cause in the decision of the senate. Three or four thousand Indians then set upon the cavalry, and were only driven off by the aid of the musketry and artillery, leaving fifty dead upon the ground. As evening drew nigh, the army found itself marching over a level plain lying between the hills, with farm-houses thickly set among fields of maize and maguey. They halted near a brook, and the soldiers dressed their wounds with the fat of dead Indians, and feasted heartily upon the dogs of the Indians, which were caught as they returned to the deserted houses of their masters at night.

After this battle had come off, the embassadors arrived with some Tlascallans, who paid their compliments to Cortez in the name of the senate, who granted his request to enter their capital, and blamed the Otomies for the disagreeable reception he had encountered. Cortez was too well versed in intrigue himself not to understand the full meaning of this message, but he sent back a grateful reply, promising to avail himself of their offer and visit them in their own capital. The next morning, after taking every precaution against surprise, the army resumed its march. They had scarcely got into marching order when they were attacked by a Tlascallan squadron, with arrows, darts, and stones. Cortez, having first sent three prisoners to them with a message of peace, ordered a halt, but the enemy would not consider his overtures, and being much annoyed by their persistence, he finally gave the war-cry, "*Santiago*, and at them!" Great slaughter was committed amongst them by the musketry and artillery and the Tlascallans retreated to some broken ground, where Xicotencatl, the general-in-chief, was posted, with his army drawn up in good order.

This army contained twenty or thirty thousand men, and fell upon the Spaniards so savagely that they would have

all been destroyed but for their armor, their artillery and horses, and the exceeding great bravery with which they defended themselves. During this engagement the Tlascallans settled a question that had long troubled them, and that was, whether the horses, those great creatures that aided the Spaniards in their battles, were mortal or immortal. They settled it in just such a way as those Indians of Hayti did, when they held the belief that the Spaniards themselves were children of the gods and could not be killed. The Haytians took a Spaniard and held his head under water till he ceased to breathe, thus proving conclusively that those monsters who were hurrying them to torment were mortals like themselves. The Tlascallans selected a single horseman in the thick of the fight, and while a number of them engaged him and struck him from his horse, another warrior, with a single blow from his great two-handed sword, killed the animal he rode.

It must have been a tremendous blow this, with that wooden sword edged with flints; but it did not cut off the horse's head, as some historians have averred, for that would have been impossible, with a weapon set only with sharp stones, and without a continuous edge; but it killed the horse, and settled their doubts forever as to its immortality! Then these brave Indians, while the fight was raging round them, and their companions were falling by scores, cut the animal in pieces and sent a portion to every district in Tlascala. It was a trophy worthy of preservation, to be kept by their children when they should have passed away; for it was the first of those monsters slain by them, and its dismembered carcass showed these observant Indians that it was only a larger animal than any they had in Mexico, and could easily be killed.

The Spaniards finally beat off the enemy, with a loss to

themselves of but one killed and fifteen wounded, and the next day they devoted to recruiting their strength and in making crossbows and arrows. By a raid upon a large village, Cortez secured many fowls and dogs for food, and made several prisoners. The latter he sent to Xicotencatl, expostulating with him for his madness in resisting his advance; but the only reply of the fierce warrior was that the Spaniards should go to Tlascala only as prisoners, where their hearts and blood would be offered to the gods, and that the next morning Cortez should hear from him in person.

A famous duel occurred that day between a Tlascallan and a Cempoallan noble, in sight of both armies; both fought with great skill, but finally the Cempoallan cut his antagonist to the ground, and hacking off his head bore it to the Spanish camp in triumph. Such an incident must have reminded the Spaniards of the exploits of their fathers, in the time of famous Ferdinand and Isabella, when Moor and Christian met in mortal combat under the walls of Granada. The inflexible Xicotencatl was evidently determined to attempt the utter destruction of the Spaniards on the following day, the battles heretofore having been merely skirmishes to feel the force and strength of his enemy. He was now without any doubts as to their being ordinary mortals like himself, for his warriors had killed, not only some of the men themselves, but their horses, those fierce animals that coursed so fleetly over the plain and trampled upon their stoutest fighting-men. He gathered his forces anew and prepared to renew the contest. Fifty thousand men were ranged under his banner. As the sun rose on that eventful morning it saw this large array covering the plain in every direction. Ten squadrons, each of not less than five thousand men, each with its own particular banner and commanded by its own cacique, with nodding

plumes and golden ornaments, were gathered in front of the common standard of the republic: a golden eagle with expanded wings. To show them that he meant to conquer them fairly by force of arms, Prince Xicotencatl sent the Spaniards a present of three hundred turkeys and two hundred baskets of cakes. Soon after, two thousand of his men dashed so violently upon the Spanish lines that they broke through and penetrated to the centre of the camp.

The Spaniards were not blind to the danger they were to be in that day; all the preceding night they had been confessing their sins to their reverend fathers and preparing for the worst. They found themselves attacked by an enemy of great energy and skill at arms, and armed with pikes, lances, swords, double and triple-pointed darts, as well as bows and arrows. Had it not been for discord among themselves they might that day have conquered, and their nation have been saved from everlasting disgrace. But two of the generals — unworthy to be named in the same breath with Xicotencatl — became offended at the commander-in-chief, and withdrew their forces, remaining idle spectators while their comrades engaged the Spaniards in deadly combat. For hours the battle raged, the brave Tlascallans filling up the terrible gaps made by the artillery in their ranks so quickly as to present a solid front to their foes throughout the fight, and carrying away their dead with such despatch that none remained on the ground to tell the tale of their losses. Fate was against the Tlascallans that day; their republic, like the kingdom of the Aztecs, was divided against itself; the Spaniards conquered, not alone through their indomitable valor, but owing to disaffection in the Tlascallan ranks. Seventy Spaniards, and all the horses, were wounded, one man killed, and all so worn down with fatigue as to be unable to pursue the retiring

foe. "How wretched and comfortless," wrote one of the conquerors, "was our situation after our hardships and dangers! We could not procure even oil and salt; and the cutting winds of the snow-covered mountains made us shiver again."

Cortez now renewed his offers of peace to the senate, and now they were half willing to listen to them. But the war chief, Xicotencatl, was unwilling yet to abandon the contest; he knew he could afford to lose a score of men for every one of the Spaniards, if he could but vanquish them in the end. He sent for their diviners and astrologers, who told him to prepare a night attack. "These strangers," said they, "being *children of the sun*, are invincible during the day; but as soon as night arrives, by want of the genial heat of that luminary, they are deprived of strength to defend themselves."

Accordingly the general marched upon the camp at night, with ten thousand chosen warriors; but Cortez had had intimation of their coming and was ready for them, giving them such a reception that they did not venture to repeat a nocturnal attack. As it was moonlight, the cavalry pursued them through the cornfields, inflicting great slaughter.

Then Xicotencatl was almost in despair, for not only was he abandoned by half his forces with their respective generals, but the senate was resolved to make peace with the Spaniards. Sending him orders to desist from his attacks upon them, he refused to obey, and when they sent to depose him his warriors and captains resisted their authority. But for the craven spirit of these counselors, and the traitorous conduct of those generals who held aloof from the fight, Tlascala might have freed herself from these creatures of prey, who later sapped her life-blood; and Montezuma, seeing their noble deeds,

would have been glad to conclude with them an honorable peace, for having freed his dominion from a foe so dangerous to the safety of his empire. But here again stepped in inexorable fate, and decreed that the Spaniards should succeed, that the Indians should themselves forge the chains that their descendants were to wear for hundreds of years. At last, apparently yielding to the importunities of the senators — it is not the only example history offers us of disaster following close upon the meddling of senators and congressmen with affairs of war — Xicotencatl sent an embassy of fifty persons to Cortez, carrying with them bread and fruit, four old women, some incense and parrots' feathers. "This present," said they, "our general sends you. If you are, as it is said, *Teules*, and desire human sacrifice, here are these four women; take their hearts and blood for food; if you are men, here are fowls, bread, and fruit; if you are benignant gods, we offer you this incense and these parrots' feathers."

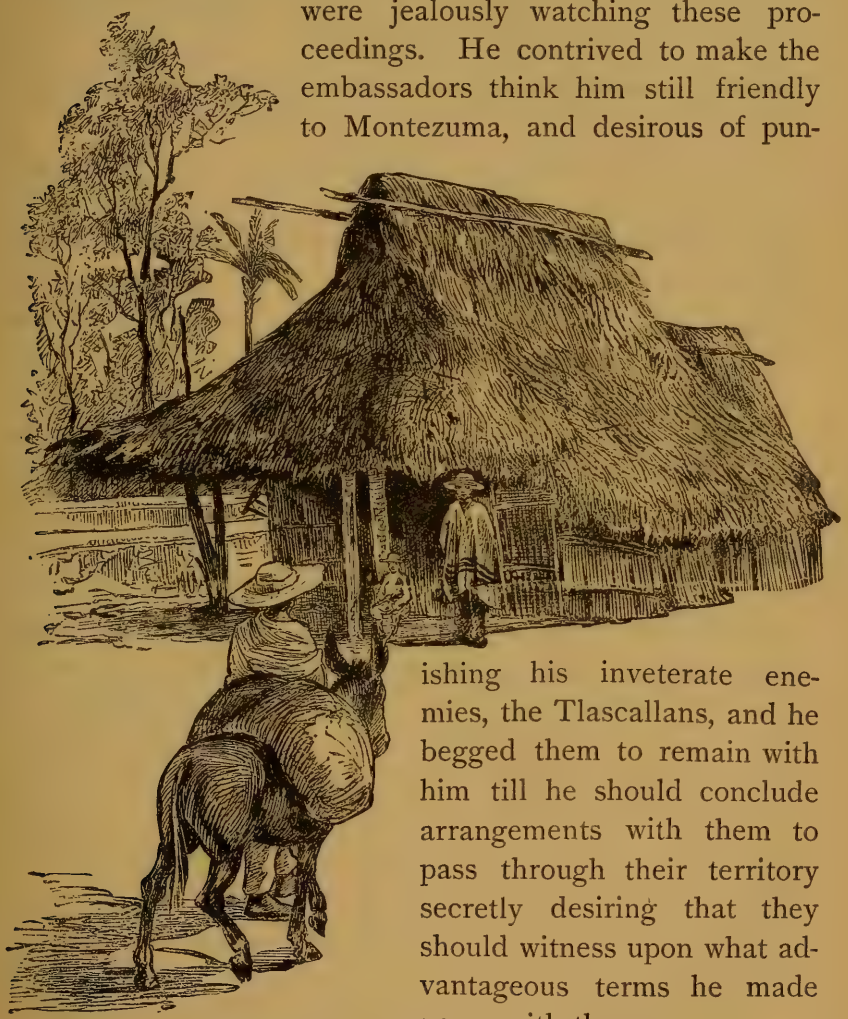
This was seemingly an honest message enough, but the Cempoallan allies told Cortez that these men were *spies*, and only making an inspection of the camp preparatory to another nocturnal attack by Xicotencatl. At their instigation he arrested four of them, who confessed the object of their coming; and at this he committed one of the most cruel deeds of those cruel times: He caused *the hands of those fifty spies to be cut off*, and then sent them back, mutilated and bleeding, to tell their general that, come when he would, by night or by day, he would find the Spaniards prepared for him, and should not fail to find out the metal they were made of.

The news of the continued successes of the Spaniards being carried to Montezuma, he had summoned again a council of the kings, and requested their advice. The King of Tezcoco advised that the strangers should be

courteously treated in every place through which they passed, as all embassadors from one sovereign to another were wont to be and entitled to according to their laws, the king still preserving his supreme authority, and exacting the respect due to the majesty of the throne. If they should seem to design anything against the state, or the person of the king, then force and severity should be employed against them. Other advice was that which had proved so pernicious in the first dealings with them, namely, to send them a rich present and request them to depart from the country. Montezuma knew not what to do, for he foresaw that the dread arrivals would surely form an alliance with his deadly foes, the Tlascallans, unless they were destroyed by them — which did not seem probable; and another cause for alarm was, the action of Ixtlilxochitl, the disaffected Tezcocan prince, who was then at the head of a formidable army at Otompan, and who meditated an alliance with the Spaniards as soon as they should emerge from Tlascallan territory. Unhappily for him, he sent fresh baits for the cupidity of the Spaniards in the shape of a thousand cotton garments, and a large quantity of gold and feathers. These were in charge of six embassadors, accompanied by a retinue of two hundred men, who were advised to congratulate the Spaniards on their victories, but at the same time to attempt to dissuade them from continuing farther towards his capital.

It may be a matter of surprise that such a large embassy should be allowed by the Tlascallans to treat with a personage in their country, but it was according to the law of nations, observed by them, that the persons of embassadors should always be sacred from harm. Cortez received this embassy, with its rich presents, with greater joy than he was willing the Tlascallans should perceive, for (as in the instance of the messengers of Montezuma treating

with him at Cempoalla), it gave him great importance in the eyes of those by whom he was surrounded, and who were jealously watching these proceedings. He contrived to make the embassadors think him still friendly to Montezuma, and desirous of punishing his inveterate enemies, the Tlascallans, and he begged them to remain with him till he should conclude arrangements with them to pass through their territory secretly desiring that they should witness upon what advantageous terms he made peace with them.



VIEW IN TIERRA CALIENTE.

Fear that the Spaniards might make an alliance with the Mexicans, when they would then be able combined to sweep the Tlascallans from the face of the earth, caused Xicotencatl to yield to the wishes of the senators and treat

for peace. Consequently, he soon presented himself at the camp of the Spaniards, with a noble retinue clad in garments of red and white, and, excusing himself for his hostilities on account of the belief that Cortez was a friend of Montezuma — having accepted so many valuable presents from him, and being accompanied by Mexican troops — he now promised a firm peace and eternal alliance on the part of his people. Cortez assured him that he wanted nothing else, though the chief gave him but a small present of gold and cotton,— apologizing for its being so little on account of the poverty of his country, — and received him with many demonstrations of respect.

After peace had been concluded Cortez ordered mass to be celebrated; and it may well be imagined that the soldiers were ready to offer thanksgiving for the prospect of a season of rest. The Mexican embassadors, who had witnessed all this, now warned the Spaniards against Tlascallan perfidy, but Cortez declared he was not afraid of them, even in their capital, and invited the Mexicans along to see how he would treat with them, and how he would punish them if they should prove treacherous.

CHAPTER XVII.

TLASCALA, CHOLULA, AND MEXICO.

THE Tlascallans never broke faith with the Spaniards, not even when they had them in her power at their capital, nor when, crushed and bleeding, they returned to them from their disastrous defeat at Mexico. Once having made treaty with them, they gave over all thoughts of revenge; the past was completely buried; they received the conquerors into their homes, gave them their sisters and daughters for wives, and what gold the country afforded. This present was small, because, they explained, Montezuma absorbed it all as a condition by which he refrained from a war upon them of extermination. Another present, the second received in Tlascalla, now arrived from Montezuma, — jewels and gold, dresses of cotton and beautiful feathers.

It is strange how blind that monarch was to the actual consequences of such an exhibition of his wealth; while he thought to bribe the conquerors to retire, he was only offering stronger inducements for them to advance. It was only the burning desire to witness for themselves the source of all this wonderful wealth that urged them on; but for that, Cortez would long before have been left alone.

The aged senators came out to meet him, in hammocks and litters, and ratified the alliance; they acknowledged themselves as vassals to the King of Spain; a fact very gratifying to Cortez, and humiliating to them, as they had maintained their independence, as a people, from time immemorial.

At the entrance to the city, which the soldiers said would compare favorably with Granada at the time of its capture from the Moors, they were received by a crowd of near one hundred thousand people. Arches of flowers were sprung across the streets by the inhabitants, who gave flowers to the soldiers and hung garlands upon the necks of the horses.

[A. D. 1519.] This day of music and rejoicing was the twenty-third of September, a day celebrated even in modern times by the people of Tlascala. The officers and troops were assigned quarters, each man being given a bed of *nequen*, or aloe-fibre, to sleep on. Not yet fully satisfied as to the good faith of the Tlascallans, Cortez kept his men under arms, keeping watch at night, and sentinels at the doorways and on the parapets; and when the senate complained of their lack of faith in their good intentions the general told them it was the custom of his country, and they were satisfied. Many of the cotton garments presented by Montezuma were given by Cortez to the Tlascallan chiefs, for, through poverty, they yet wore dresses of *nequen*, cotton being a coast product, and prohibited.

With all his powers of persuasion, Cortez could not induce these people to turn from their idols, who, they said, gave them rain, and victories over their enemies. He showed them a "beauteous image of our Lady," but, though they promised to respect her, they could not be induced to abandon their other gods in her favor.

THE HOLY CITY.

The Tlascallans so far yielded to the advice of Cortez as to break the wooden cages in which they confined prisoners destined for sacrifice, to set these wretches free, and promise to desist from this horrid practice in the future. They strongly advised him not to advance any farther, but

to settle amongst them with his troops, and they gave him and his officers some of the noblest Indian women as wives, in order to strengthen the alliance between them. They cautioned him against the people of Cholula, their next neighbors, who had formerly been allies of theirs, but who, by a detestable act of treachery, had won their undying hate, and were now subjects, or allies, of Montezuma. There were two roads to the Mexican capital, the most direct was through the country of the *Huexotzincos*, who had already sent in their allegiance to the King of Spain; the other through the district of Cholula, the residence of the priests of Quetzalcoatl. The embassadors of Montezuma advised them to go by the way of Cholula, because, though the route was longer, they could perform the journey with less discomfort. Cortez sent to ask the Cholulans why they had not offered their congratulations on his arrival, and they returned reply that they feared the Tlascallans, who were a base and treacherous people, but that they now acknowledged themselves vassals of his king, and hoped he would pay them a visit.

Four of the principal nobility of the Mexican court now arrived, with more gold and more mantles, amounting to ten thousand crowns' value of the former, and ten bales of the latter. Montezuma had now changed his policy, probably seeing that the Spaniards were determined to advance at all odds, and thinking perhaps that it would be better to receive them as friends than to allow them to league themselves with his enemies, the Tlascallans. He sent to them, saying that he "wondered at their staying amongst a people so poor and base as the Tlascallans, who were robbers, and unfit even for slaves," and then invited to his capital.

When the Tlascallans saw that Cortez would go to Mexico, and through the district of Cholula, they raised an

army of fifty thousand men, foreseeing, no doubt, an opportunity for revenge upon the Cholulans for past offences. Cortez would accept of only six thousand, and even these, when he approached the city of Cholula, were obliged to encamp outside upon the plain.

The holy city of the priests was eighteen miles distant from Tlascala, and about sixty from Mexico, situated (as now) in the centre of a beautiful and highly-cultivated plain. It was very populous, containing, according to Cortez himself, who described it in one of his letters, above forty



CHOLULA.

thousand houses. It was celebrated for its commerce and its manufactures of cotton and pottery. Famous above all, was it, as the site of the holy pyramid of *Quetzalcoatl*, which towered above the plain and supported the sanctuary of that divinity, who (it will be seen, by referring to Chap. II.), dwelt here many years prior to his final departure from Anahuac. The city was full of temples and priests, and the latter came out to meet them, fumigated them with incense, and welcomed them to their houses, except their enemies, the Tlascallans, whom they insisted should camp

outside. Cortez could not object to this, and his allies were hutted on the plain, while he and his soldiers were provided with lodgings in the city. These people gave in their allegiance to Cortez without hesitation, but refused to abandon their ancient religion, which was the oldest in the country — that of the Toltecs themselves — and had not the repulsive features of that of the Aztecs and Tlascallans. In fact, it was far superior to that of the Spaniards themselves; it required milder sacrifices, and less bloody deeds were committed in its name.

Now we come to chronicle a deed, the committal of which forever stamps this abandoned crew as the basest, most depraved body of adventurers that ever collected itself together for plunder and murder. Cortez had, or thought he had, just suspicions of treachery on the part of the Cholulans; his allies charged them with it, asserting that Montezuma had secretly sent an army of twenty thousand men to Cholula, and that the people, at a favorable moment, were to rise and massacre every man of the Spanish army. The mistress of Cortez, the faithful Marina, whom he had obtained at Tabasco, pretended that one of the ladies of Cholula had confided to her this fact. The Cempoallan allies, who still continued with Cortez, said they had observed the Cholulans digging pits in the streets for the disabling of the horses, and some of the Tlascallans came in with the news that the women and children were fleeing to the mountains.

The provisions failed about this time, and only wood and water were furnished by the authorities. Calling a consultation of his officers, Cortez asked their opinion, but still held to his own, which agreed with his inclination: to put every man in the city to the sword. He gave out that he would depart on the following day, and secretly sent word to the Tlascallans to storm the city at sunrise and to kill every

man they met. Two of the priests were said to have confessed that Montezuma had notice from his gods that the Spaniards were to be delivered into their power at Cholula to be sacrificed, and an old woman had confessed to Marina that her husband, who was a chief, had received from Mexico a present of a golden drum, and that many other presents had been distributed among the chiefs and generals. Next morning, as the nobles assembled to superintend the removal of the baggage of the Spanish army, and the men of burden were preparing to take up their loads, Cortez ordered the great gates of the court to be closed. There were already assembled in the courts of the immense building in which the Spaniards were lodged, a multitude of people, comprising the flower of Cholulan nobility. After addressing these people, informing them that he knew they were preparing to sacrifice his soldiers, that he knew they had pots already boiling, and seasoning of salt and tomatoes ready for the preparation of their flesh, he ordered his soldiers to fall upon the defenceless crowd. The signal was given by the discharge of a musket; then all those ferocious villains fell upon the Cholulans and slaughtered them without mercy. Not one was left alive; blood flowed in streams, and the groans and cries of the dying rent the air. When all these hundreds had been put to death, the savage Spaniards sallied into the streets, and, together with the fierce Tlascallans, rushed like famished tigers upon the Cholulans. Fire added to the sword in sweeping the city clear of people, and in a short time over six thousand inhabitants had died most miserable deaths.

And all this had been done in revenge for a fancied slight! There was no necessity for the passing of the Spanish army this way; in fact, the other was the shorter road. There was no demand for such a wholesale mas-

sacre; there was no certain proof that such was intended against the Spaniards. Even had the Cholulans neglected to supply the army with provisions, they were certainly entitled to excuse on the ground that Cortez had forced himself upon them, and had marched to their city with their deadliest enemies, whom they had every reason to hate. Viewed from any standpoint, this massacre was unjustifiable; yet when the wretched inhabitants — such as had been saved from the fury of the Tlascallans, and the equally savage Spaniards — came creeping back to the smoldering ruins of their homes, Cortez made as though he were the aggrieved one and these miserable women and children the real offenders!

Some of the nobles had been spared, and these begged of him to allow the women and children to return to the city after the massacre was over, for they were wandering in terror and dismay in the mountains. What heart-rending scenes might then have been witnessed, as these helpless innocents groped through the ruins of their once beautiful city in search of fathers, sons, and brothers, greeted by the groans of the dying and the insulting taunts of the victors! The soldiers took a great quantity of booty, gems, gold and silver, while the Tlascallans seized the cotton, feathers, and salt; they also made many slaves.

Nothing more is heard of the army of twenty thousand men that was said to have been sent by Montezuma, and it is thought by many to have existed solely in the imagination of the Spaniards. After passing fourteen days in and about Cholula, Cortez prepared to continue his march to Mexico. He had sent a full account of proceedings to Montezuma, giving his own story, but affecting to believe that the Mexican monarch had nothing to do with it, and the king had sent him another large present, congratulating him on his victory. Whether there was treachery on the

part of Montezuma, at whose instigation the Cholulans were to rise upon and sacrifice the Spaniards, or not, seems never to have been fully proven. It seems more in accordance with what we know of Cortez and his band to believe that there was no treachery intended, except by the Spaniards themselves, and the massacre was committed in order to strike terror into the hearts of all the inhabitants of the Mexican valley, and to secure the rich booty that would fall to the share of the victors.

The Spanish army at last moved out of Cholula, leaving behind them woe and ruin, tears, wounds, death, and lamentation, as they did at Tabasco, and, turning their backs upon the fertile plains, commenced to climb the mountains.

Between them and the central valley of Mexico lay only a ridge of mountains, but a ridge containing two of the highest peaks in North America, which rose directly before them. *Popocatapetl* was the name of the highest peak, which, rising to a height of nearly 18,000 feet, had its summit always covered with snow. Popocatapetl is an Indian name, and signifies the "hill that smokes," because it is a volcano, and within the memory of the Indians had belched out smoke and even ashes. A few miles away from this volcano rose another, a long, broken ridge covered with snow, and called *Iztaccihuatl* — or "the woman in white;" named by the Spaniards, *La Mujer Blanca* — which signifies the same thing. This name had been given to it on account of its shape, which has a fancied resemblance to a great. dead giantess, robed in snowy white. Between these giant mountains ran the trail to Mexico, and from their western slopes the Spaniards first caught sight of the Aztec city, which, though near sixty miles away, could be seen glimmering in the sunlight like a fairy creation of pyramids and palaces.



VOLCANOES AS SEEN FROM MEXICO.

If Montezuma had really intended harm to the Spanish army this would have been the place, in this gap, where he would, beyond all doubt, have attacked them. For the trail ascends to a height of nearly 14,000 feet, where the winds are of chilling temperature, and the roads wind through great black forests of pine and hemlock, where an Aztec army would have every advantage for an ambuscade. They found nothing to prevent their ascent and descent, except trees felled to obstruct their passage, and another day found them within the limits of the valley of Anahuac, with their goal in sight, at intervals, from the higher hills.

At Cholula, previous to leaving it behind him, Cortez had dismissed the Cempoallans and had accepted from the Tlascallans a thousand men to carry his baggage and draw the artillery. He might have had ten thousand had he so chosen, but that great number it would not have been policy to carry into Montezuma's kingdom on an errand of peace. The Cempoallans returned to their homes; and we do not know that they ever received a reward for their inestimable services; they fell, with the rest of the Indian nations, under Spanish dominion, and to-day you cannot find their city, save perhaps a stone or two of its ruins. Many of them, and likewise all the Indians brought from Cuba, perished of cold and privation when they reached the cold altitudes of the table-lands.

The feelings of the conquerors, as they caught sight of the royal city, situated in the centre of that vast valley, the hills, plains, mountains, even the lakes, dotted with cities and villages, all exhibiting tokens of wealth and power, must have been indescribable. To the first feeling of exhilaration, consequent upon gazing upon such a glorious scene, must have succeeded gloomy reflections upon their own position in this powerful kingdom, sur-

rounded on every side by enemies. Had not their bravery been equal to their depravity, they would have turned about for Vera Cruz then and there. But some undefined impulse urged them on; the magnet that drew them was perhaps the gold of Montezuma, for which they were ready to sell their souls.

On the western slope of the mountains, more embassadors met Cortez with another present from Montezuma, and with earnest entreaties that he would reconsider his determination and desist from marching upon Mexico. He promised, if they would return, to send a great treasure of gold and jewels for the King of Spain, four loads of gold for Cortez himself, and a load for each of the soldiers. This would have amounted to millions of dollars, for a load was equivalent to *fifty pounds!* Cortez courteously thanked the embassadors, but said that nothing could now turn him from his mission when so near the royal residence.

On the second day they passed through *Amecameca* and *Tlalmanalco*, two towns that yet exist as thriving settlements. Either in the last named place, or at Chalco — so celebrated in the aboriginal history of Mexico — they were met by the King of Tezcoco, *Cacamatzin*, who had come by request of Montezuma, to make a last appeal to Cortez to return whence he came. He was borne in a magnificent litter, and adorned with gold and feathers, and when he alighted his lords went before him and swept the ground over which he was to pass. After an interchange of presents, the king preferred his request, and Cortez answered it as he had the others.

"If this is so," said the king on taking leave; "if you are determined to go on, we will see each other at court."

And they did *see each other at court*, not many months later, when the Spaniard received the king as a *prisoner*, by the orders of Montezuma himself.

The army skirted the south-eastern shore of Lake Chalco, and at a town called *Ayocingo* (at this day existing), where was a harbor for the canoes of the merchants, they entered a causeway that led to a small island. Here was a city known as *Cuitlahuac* (to-day *Tlahuac*), which was thought by the Spaniards to be the most beautiful they had ever seen. Another causeway led across the lake to the north, and over this the army marched to *Iztapalapan* — to-day, called *Ixtapalapa* — where they saw palaces built of stone,



with massive cedar beams, lovely gardens of flowers, and ponds of clear water. Here also they saw those wonderful "floating gardens" for the first time, and were struck with astonishment at the many works of art and evidences of taste and refinement.

Here the rebellious Tezcocan prince, Ixtlilxochitl, with a portion of his army, met them and tendered his services to the Spanish crown, offering to join forces with Cortez if

he would attack the Mexican king. He was quieted for a while with a diplomatic answer, and went back to his mountain capital to nurse his wrath till the time arrived for action.

Great crowds, that continually increased, now obstructed the way; curiosity alone moved them to inspect these strangers, for they were the first that had ever entered their territory.

What a sight they must have been to those Indians, these mailed men, with their glittering armor, flashing swords and helmets, their terrible aids, the horses, and their artillery! Sternly they marched along, with solid front and close ranks, the tramp of their iron heels ringing ominously upon the stone causeway.

The Spaniards were not less amazed at what they saw than the Indians. Here is a description by one of them: "When we beheld the number of populous towns on the water and firm ground, and that broad causeway running straight and level to the city, we could compare it to nothing but the enchanted scenes we had read of in Amadis of Gaul, from the great towers and temples and other edifices of lime and stone which seemed to rise out of the water. To many of us it appeared doubtful whether we were asleep or awake; nor is the manner in which I express myself to be wondered at, for it must be considered that never yet did man see, hear, or dream of anything equal to the spectacle which appeared to our eyes on this day!"

From the beautiful city of Iztapalapa, which was situated on a peninsula between the fresh-water lake of Chalco and the great salt-water lake of Tezcoco, a road led to *Mexicalcingo* — yet to be found on the map of Mexico — and thence it was straight away to the capital.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE AZTEC STRONGHOLD.

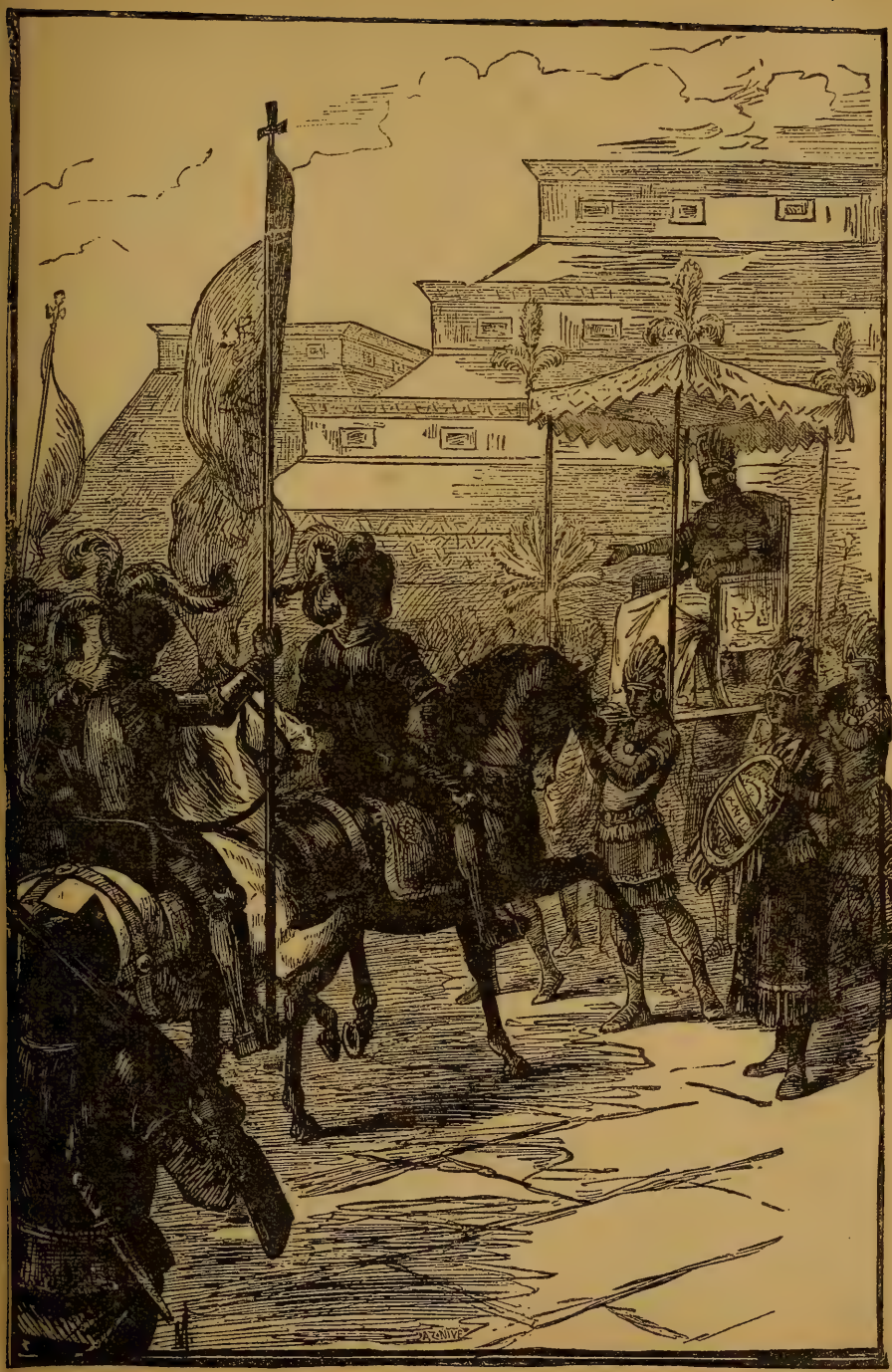
[A. D. 1519.] THE city of Mexico, built on an island in Lake Tezcoco, was connected with the mainland by four causeways of stone. That by which Cortez approached, six miles in length, commenced at Mexicalcingo, and, crossing the lake to the island, was prolonged on the north to *Tepeyacac*, where is now the shrine of Guadalupe; another ran nearly west, and the fourth, which supported an aqueduct, terminated at Chapultepec. All centred in the great square of the city, from which branched other streets and canals, or streets one-half water and the other half solid earth. All these causeways were intersected by broad ditches to allow passage to the water of the lake, crossed by wooden bridges that could be easily raised, and thus cut off the retreat of an enemy brave enough to advance over them.

The grand causeway was eight yards wide, and ran straight to Mexico. In good order, the Spaniards marched over it between the assembled thousands of Indians. At about a mile from the city this causeway was joined by another from the town of Coyoacan, and at their juncture was a small, though strong, fortress, with walls ten feet high, battlements, two entrances, and a drawbridge. This point was called *Xoloc*, and was occupied by Cortez in the following year as his military headquarters, whence he directed the siege of the city. The army halted here, and waited, until more than a thousand Mexican nobles had

passed by and saluted the general. As this salute consisted of a low bow, touching the earth with the hand and then kissing it, the halt was a very long one. An hour or two later the army moved on, and just as the city limits were reached they were informed that the great Montezuma was approaching. They halted and Cortez dismounted from his horse. The monarch appeared, borne in a litter upon the shoulders of four nobles, while others carried golden rods in front to indicate his coming. The litter was covered with plates of gold, its canopy ornamented with green feathers, gold, and pendants of precious stones. Supported upon the arms of two of his principal lords, Montezuma, having alighted from the litter, advanced to meet Cortez. He wore upon his head a golden crown, rich mantles, worked with gold and jewels, hung from his shoulders, and upon his feet were golden sandals, tied with strings of leather ornamented with gems.

As they met, Cortez threw upon his neck a string of glass beads, and would have embraced him had not the lords in attendance interposed. Montezuma made a short speech of welcome, and in return for the glass beads gave the audacious stranger two necklaces of mother-of-pearl, hung with beautiful crayfish of gold. Having then given orders to his brother, Prince *Cuitlahuatzin*, to conduct Cortez and his army to the palace provided for them, he returned to the city with the King of Tezcoco. The entire populace had been drawn out to observe this extraordinary spectacle. As Montezuma passed, attended by his nobles, they crowded close to the walls, not daring even to lift up their eyes.

On the western side of the great square, which contained the holy pyramid and the temples and altars to their various gods, stood the palace of Axayacatl, father of Montezuma. Into this immense building, which contained ample room for them all, not less than seven thousand in



MEETING OF CORTEZ AND MONTEZUMA.

number, the Spanish army was conducted. Montezuma and his nobles stood waiting for them at the gate, and, when they had arrived, took Cortez graciously by the hand and showed him his apartment, at the same time placing a valuable collar of gold about his neck. The walls were hung with tapestry of cotton with golden fringe, mats of rushes and palm leaves covered the floors, low seats of wood were provided as chairs, and everything in and about the palace was neat and clean. Then giving orders to his officers to prepare provisions and refreshments for his weary guests, Montezuma said to Cortez, "You are now in your own house," and withdrew, leaving the Spaniards amazed at the magnificence of their surroundings and the munificence of the emperor.

After the grim and battered warriors had filed in, with their Indian allies and attendants, Cortez planted cannon to defend the gate, distributed guards about the parapets, and then, having placed himself in a posture of defence, fired a salute from the cannon, in order to terrify the Mexicans and to express their triumph in having at last reached the goal of their desires.

This memorable day, the eighth of November, 1519, seven months after their arrival on the Mexican coast, was terminated by a banquet, at which the nobles served them, and distributed to officers and soldiers abundance of such as the land produced.

The following day, Cortez, attended by five of his captains, paid a visit to Montezuma in his own palace, which was reached by crossing the great square. They were graciously received by the lords-in-waiting, and, after having been required to cover their garments with coarse wrappers and to put off their shoes, they were admitted into the royal presence. Montezuma put many questions to them about their country of Spain and its government,

and finally Cortez drew the conversation upon religion, which he explained to the king, was the real object of his embassy. He drew a touching picture of the concern of the King of Spain — a monarch who sanctioned the burning of heretics in his own dominions — for the souls of the inhabitants of Mexico. He told him — what was utterly false — that this great monarch had such deep sympathy for them, and was so desirous of leading them away from the worship of idols, that would only destroy their souls, that he had despatched him on his mission. Montezuma made a reply, in substance the same as that given by the Tlascallans to a similar request that they should abandon their idols: that their gods were good enough for them, that they gave them sun, and rain, and victories; he desired Cortez to say no more on the subject. This interview ended with another present from Montezuma to the Spaniards: to the general he gave a large quantity of golden ornaments, to each of the captains three loads of mantles, and to each soldier two loads of these valuable articles, richly wrought. He was so generous and affable that he won the heart of every soldier, and if he entertained any designs against them he well concealed his feelings beneath an appearance of content, even of gayety.

"He was at this time about forty years of age, of good height, and well-proportioned, with a complexion much fairer than that of the Indians in general, wearing short black hair, and a very thin beard. His countenance was pleasing, and gravity and good humor blended together when he spoke." His clothing was often changed, as he was cleanly in his habits, and bathed frequently; and a garment having been once worn, was not put on again for four days after. A thousand people comprised his household. "His cooks had upwards of thirty different ways of dressing meats, and had earthen vessels so contrived as to

keep them always hot. For the table of Montezuma himself, above three hundred dishes were prepared, and for his guards above a thousand; the ordinary meats were pheasants, geese, quails, venison, peccaries, pigeons, hares and rabbits, with many other animals and birds peculiar to the country. Torches of aromatic wood gave light in winter; the table was covered with snowy cloths and napkins, and four beautiful women presented him with water for his hands in vessels which they called *Xicales* — or calabashes. A screen was placed before him when he ate, to shield him from the gaze of the vulgar, and four ancient noblemen stood near the throne at this time, to whom Montezuma occasionally presented a plate of food, which they ate with every token of humility. Fruit of every kind was placed before him, and from time to time he drank a little foaming chocolate, which was presented him in golden cups. Sometimes he had singers and dancers to amuse him, as well as deformed and hump-backed dwarfs, acrobats, and jesters. After he had dined, four female attendants brought him water with which to wash his hands, and then they presented him with three *little canes*, highly ornamented, containing liquidamber mixed with *tobacco;* and when he had sufficiently viewed and heard the singers, dancers, and buffoons, he took a little of the smoke of one of these canes, and then laid himself down to sleep; and thus his principal meal was concluded."

About the great square in the centre of the city were grouped all the principal buildings; within it were the temples, the largest of which was the holy pyramid — the *teocalli* — (already described in Chap. III.) and various others. There was one like an immense *serpent*, which Bernal Diaz, one of the conquerors, said he could never pass without comparing it with the infernal regions, for at the door "stood frightful idols; by it was a place for sacrifice, and within it

boilers and pots full of water to dress the flesh of the victims, which was eaten by the priests. The idols were like serpents and devils, and before them were tables and knives for sacrifice, the place being covered with the blood which was spilled on those occasions."

Near this temple was another, full of bones, and skulls and skeletons, piled in heaps and laid in rows. The dwellings of the priests, the colleges and nunneries, were within the vast enclosure also. The great wall which surrounded it had four gates, above which were places for the collection of the royal arms. In the Place of Skulls, these ghastly emblems were symmetrically arranged, and when one dropped from its place, owing to decay, it was replaced by a fresh one. Some of the conquerors declared that they counted the skulls preserved in this horrible place, and that there were one hundred and thirty-six thousand!

The favorite palace of Montezuma was built of stone, whitened with lime, and had twenty doors opening into the public square. It contained more than a hundred chambers, three great courts adorned with fountains and gardens, and apartments finished in jasper and marble. One of these halls was so large that it would hold, according to credible testimony, *three thousand persons*. Upon the roof of some of the buildings, some of the Spanish officers declared, there was ample room for a tournament! These roofs were flat, and sometimes with battlements; the houses were of stone, one and two stories in height, sometimes roofed with stone and sometimes with thatch; but all with immense beams of cedar and cypress. Two great houses about the central square were devoted to the animals of the kingdom, and contained every variety of bird and beast it was possible to obtain, even snakes and alligators. The birds alone demanded three hundred men for their daily care, and they had physicians also, who carefully noted their diseases and

prescribed for them. Strong wooden cages contained pumas, jaguars, wolves and wild-cats, to whom, it was said, were thrown the bodies of the sacrificed victims, after the limbs had been reserved for the table of the priests. Outside of the city there were woods, in which the emperor hunted, and gardens and groves in which he delighted to ramble, supplied with canals of running water, fountains and springs, like those of Chapultepec, which exist to this day.

About this vast square, also, were the palaces of the nobles and the lords of distant provinces, who were obliged to reside here a portion of their time; the royal arsenal, full of every kind of aboriginal weapons, shields, and helmets; in fact, all the public buildings and residences of Mexico's greatest men were here. There were other squares and market-places, temples and towers, scattered all over the city, so that it was a most magnificent city to behold, and one to convey to a stranger an idea of vast wealth and power. No wonder that the Indians of the mountains were impressed with a sense of its grandeur, and thought the King Montezuma to be the mightiest potentate on the face of the earth!

One day, Cortez ascended to the top of the great pyramid, and there Montezuma met him and pointed out to him the notable places in the valley and the chief buildings in his city. Here the Spaniard saw that grim old idol, Huitzilopochtli, with human hearts smoking before him on some coals, and other idols to which the Aztecs had been sacrificing for a hundred years and more. Cortez attempted to reason with Montezuma upon the folly and wickedness of worshipping such hideous images: "I wonder," said he, "that a monarch so wise as you are can adore as gods those abominable figures of the devil." This he said half in jest, but Montezuma, — to whom they seemed as really

gods as the image of the Virgin to Cortez, — was shocked and grieved, and replied sadly: "If I had known that you would have spoken disrespectfully of my gods, I should not have yielded to your request to visit the platform of the temple. Go now to your quarters, go in peace, while I remain to appease the anger of our gods, which you have provoked by your blasphemy."

The king was more liberal in his views than Cortez, for he allowed him to build an adoratory for his own god, and even gave him workmen and material for the purpose. Soon after, he gave him and his soldiers more presents; great pieces of gold for Cortez, ten loads of fine mantles for him and his captains, and to every soldier two loads of mantles and two collars of gold.

In a short time, the Spaniards had visited the greater portion of the city — the people paying no particular attention to them after their first curiosity had been gratified, so well-bred were they — they had visited the great market-place where all the productions and commodities of the kingdom were gathered for sale, the courts of justice, and the temples.

It was in looking for a niche in which to place their holy emblem of the cross, that the Spaniards found the depository of Montezuma's treasure! They broke through a wall in one of the apartments and there saw "riches without end;" a vast quantity of works of gold, gems, gorgeous feathers and fabrics, silver and jewels. The secret soon leaked out, and all the soldiers had a glimpse of the royal treasure, which had been accumulated during the lifetime of Axayacatl, father of Montezuma. It was left untouched for a more convenient time, and the wall closed up. "I was then a young man," wrote the conqueror, Diaz, "and I thought that if all the treasures of the earth had been brought into one place they could not have amounted to so much."

A week had elapsed, the Spaniards had tired of sight-seeing, their allies longed for active work in the field, their cupidity was aroused by the sight of so much treasure: they longed to get it into their possession; in short, they were getting restless and were desirous of an opportunity for departure. But how could they do this without exciting the fears of the multitude by whom they were surrounded, and causing them to rush upon and massacre them in the streets? The past days and nights had been to Cortez full of anxious thought. He had placed himself in a predicament from which he saw no escape except by artful strategy; he had played a deep game, he could win only by bold moves. At last he thought he saw an opening out of the difficulty; if he could *get the emperor into his power* he might then be able either to retreat with honor, or to stay in comparative safety. But how could they do this? He had given them no pretext for seizing his person, he had not shown by word or deed that he bore them aught but the best of feeling; he had treated them like princes — they, the offscourings of Spain; had enriched them, petted and caressed them. Yet they could not believe but that he meditated evil; they judged his nature by their own; they knew what they would do had affairs been reversed, and had they been the rulers of his kingdom and he and his nobles their guests — they would have burnt him as an idolater within twenty-four hours of his coming!

Now, history has not shown that Montezuma intended to deal by them treacherously, even though the events of that time were recorded by men belonging to the nation of the conquerors themselves; yet, forgetting all his generous treatment of them, they resolved to seize him, hold him prisoner, and, if necessary, kill him! A pretext was found in an outbreak, in one of Montezuma's provinces on the coast, against the Spaniards left in garrison at Vera Cruz,

Quetzalpopoca, lord of a province contiguous to the Totonacs, had undertaken to bring the latter people under subjection. The Spanish garrison had gone to the assistance of the Totonacs, but, though they defeated Quetzalpopoca, had lost six or seven soldiers, and among them their governor, Juan de Escalante. One of the soldiers, who had an enormous beard and fierce visage, was sent as a prisoner to Montezuma, but, having died on the way, his head was cut off and presented to the emperor. Montezuma was so terrified at the ferocious aspect of this hideous trophy — the first European face he had ever looked on — that he refused to have it offered in any of his temples, and retired to a place of seclusion, greatly troubled by the event. This occurred while the Spanish army was in Cholula, and Cortez had heard of it at the time, but had kept it to himself. Now, he considered it a proper time to mention it to his soldiers, and a sufficient cause for taxing Montezuma with treachery. Having consulted with his captains, it was determined on to seize the king the very next day; and in the morning the interpreters, Aguilar and Marina, were despatched to notify the king that Cortez would visit him at his palace. He and five of his captains entered the audience-hall where they were received with much affection, and presented with some gold. Cortez soon revealed the nature of the business he came on, charging Montezuma with not only instigating the attack on the Spaniards at Vera Cruz, but also the meditated massacre at Cholula. The astonished monarch declared his innocence, and taking from his wrist a ring bearing the signet of Huitzilopochtli — the royal seal, upon presentation of which no man dared disobey the bearer of it — and giving it to an officer of his court, he commanded him to bring Quetzalpopoca and those responsible for the attack upon the Spaniards into his presence. With this, Cortez de-

clared himself much pleased, but added that he and his men would not be satisfied unless the king would consent to return with them to their quarters — in the palace of the late king, Axayacatl — and there take up his abode with them till the return of the guilty parties.

The king was thunderstruck at the audacity of such a proposal, and as soon as he could recover his senses made reply: "When was there ever an instance of a king tamely suffering himself to be led into prison? And although I were willing to debase myself in so vile a manner, would not all my vassals immediately arm themselves to set me free? I am not a man who can hide myself or fly to the mountains; without subjecting myself to such infamy, I am here now ready to satisfy your complaints." Cortez was firm, however, in persisting that he should go with them, adding that, if his subjects should attack them, they could defend themselves — forgetting, perhaps, that the very reason why he wanted Montezuma in their power was to prevent the dreaded attack.

Much argument ensued, the king giving decidedly the best reasons, when one of the soldiers, a brutal captain, spoke up in a rough voice, advising Cortez to waste no more words, but, unless he yielded, to run him through with a sword. Learning the meaning of these words, and fearing he would be murdered before his guards could come to his assistance, Montezuma cowardly yielded to his fears, and said in a trembling voice: "I am willing to trust myself with you; let us go, let us go, since the gods intend it."

Ordering his litter he got into it, and in pomp and magnificence, though closely guarded by the Spanish troops, he went from the palace, looking his last upon the hall where he had so often sat in state, for he was never to enter it again! News of such an event as this could not fail of

being rapidly spread amongst the people, and there would certainly have been an uprising and attempted rescue had not Montezuma commanded his nobles to threaten with death any one who should attempt it, and declared that the visit to the Spanish quarters was made of his own free will.

His domestics preceded him and hung an apartment with fine tapestry and transported furniture from the royal palace. They ministered to his wants as before, and he preserved the same state, giving audiences to his subjects in the same manner as when he was in supreme control. But he was now a monarch only in name, as the subsequent dealings of Cortez with him fully show.

The officers bearing the signet of the god returned in fifteen days with the culprits, Quetzalpopoca, his son, and fifteen others. They were richly dressed; putting off their shoes and covering their fine garments with coarser ones, they came into the presence of Montezuma. He received them coldly, reprimanded them for attacking the Spaniards, and then delivered them over to Cortez.

If there is anything that can reconcile us to the ignoble treatment of Montezuma by the Spanish chief, it is his baseness in delivering his vassals up to torture in order to shield himself from the consequences of his own policy and commands. There is no doubt that he commanded this lord to reduce the Totonacs to obedience — as he had a right to do, as rebellious subjects — but he had not the spirit to admit as much to the Spaniards.

Quetzalpopoca and his officers were handed over to the Spaniards, to be dealt with as traitors to the Spanish king, of whom they — the subjects of Montezuma — had never heard before in their lives! In the centre of the square a large collection was made of darts, arrows, bows, and shields, from the royal armory, which Cortez was anxious to get rid of, as they might be of use against him in the hands of the

Indians, in case of outbreak. Upon a vast pile of these the brave Mexicans were placed and fire applied. The flames leaped up and enveloped them, and soon, after exhorting one another to face death courageously, perished Quetzalpopoca and his companions, the first martyrs by fire to Spanish cruelty in Mexico.

We look with horror upon such an act as this, even after the lapse of more than three centuries, but in Mexico it was not regarded with deep feeling; and even in "Christian" Spain, forty years later, the burning of a heretic was made an occasion of feasting and rejoicing! What would not the bloody Philip of Spain have given for such a lieutenant as Cortez? Reading — if he ever read — the list of his executions, he must have exclaimed with regret, "Ah! here was a man in advance of his time; would that I had such as he to purge my kingdom with fire and sword!"

As the smoke of this terrible sacrifice ascended and spread over the valley, it carried with it the mutterings of an outraged and a revengeful people; the subjects of Montezuma could be held in check but little longer; the nobles were gathering their forces, even the priests — blind devotees of Montezuma's god — were disgusted at the servility of their king. That cloud of smoke was charged with thunder; from it was to dart the lightning that was to destroy the Spanish forces!

CHAPTER XIX.

MONTEZUMA A CAPTIVE.

SEVENTEEN souls had passed through fire to the realms beyond. Outraged justice was to be yet further insulted, buffeted, and trampled upon. During the burning of the Mexicans, Montezuma had been kept in irons. Fetters had been placed upon his ankles. Stupefied with grief and shame, he had uttered no protest, then he broke down utterly and wept; his spirit was entirely broken, the iron had entered his soul. His abasement was such, that when the tyrant entered his apartment to remove the irons, boasting of his clemency in not taking his life, Montezuma fell upon his neck with expressions of gratitude! Knowing that he had the king fully in his power, Cortez offered to allow him to return to his palace; but this he would not consent to do, well aware that the offer was insincere, and of the danger possible to his life from his incensed and disgusted nobles. Though constantly guarded, Montezuma was allowed to go wherever he liked; to the lake to fish for water-fowl, to the woods of Chapultepec to hunt, to the temple to consult his gods. Two vessels had been built, with iron from Vera Cruz and wood from the royal forests, and one day the king and his party went in them to an island in the lake kept as a preserve, where they had great sport with deer and rabbits, and enjoyed the swift sailing of the great boats, which left the Indian canoes far behind. The royal prisoner was kept amused by parades of the soldiers and by means of conversation with a page in the

employ of Cortez, who had learned the Aztec language. There was no popular commotion at the burning of the prisoners, because the people had looked upon the act as done by the orders of their king; but all the Spanish soldiers were on duty in the square; and after that the sentinels were doubled and the horses kept always saddled and bridled at night. They prepared themselves as best they could for the revolt they had every reason to expect.

The crowning act of Montezuma's perfidy was the capture and delivery into the hands of Cortez of *Cacamatzin*, King of Tezcoco. This prince, a nephew of Montezuma, had become justly indignant at the treatment his uncle was receiving at the hands of the Spaniards, and he sent to tell him that he *should not forget that he was a king*, and that he had no more spirit than a hen, to allow himself to be reduced to such a miserable condition. He called together other princes of Mexico and tried to incite them to attack these strangers who had acquired such influence over their king, and had offered such insults to their deities. "It is now time," said this sagacious prince, "to fight for our religion, for our country, for our liberty, and for our honor, before the power of those men is increased by reinforcements from their own country or new alliances in this."

Cortez became alarmed, and sent to him a reminder of their former friendship and a warning against incurring his enmity. Cacamatzin made a spirited reply, saying that he could not regard as friends those who had so grossly insulted his gods and his relatives; and declared that he would soon rid the country of such pestilent vermin.

By means unworthy of a king, Montezuma obtained possession of the person of Cacamatzin and delivered him up to Cortez to burn or imprison, as he thought best. The utter baseness of this act will be apparent when we recollect

that Cacamatzin was nephew of Montezuma, that he had been placed upon the throne by his aid, and that he had purposed resorting to arms only to free his uncle from imprisonment and his country from the presence of unprincipled oppressors. Cortez immediately placed the unfortunate prince in irons, and he subsequently perished, in the retreat from Mexico. A brother of his was in the city, *Cuicuicatzin*, who had sought protection from Cacamatzin, owing to a family quarrel. He was at once proclaimed king by Cortez and Montezuma, under the title of Don Carlos, and accepted as such by the servile nobility of Tezcoco.

It will be remembered that there were three possible heirs to the throne of Tezcoco at the death of Nezahualpilli, children of his favorite wife (see Chap. VI.). They were named *Cacamatzin*, *Coanocotzin*, and *Cuicuicatzin*. Another son, born of the second wife, was *Ixtlilxochitl*, whose warlike character and rebellious proceedings have already been noted. He was now lying in wait for events at his capital in the mountains, Otompan. The second son, Coanocotzin, was best entitled to the throne on the removal of Cacamatzin ; but it was concluded that the other brother would be a more pliant instrument in the hands of Montezuma and Cortez. Having been elevated to the throne through their combined efforts he was expected to render them aid whenever required.

By skilful strategy, Cortez soon got possession of the lords of the principal cities of the valley, the King of Tlacopan, and the high priest of Tlaltelolco. But one thing now remained to secure, as he thought, the entire kingdom to his will. This was to compel Montezuma, his nobles, and lords, to acknowledge themselves as vassals of the Emperor of Spain, Charles V., then a dissolute youth of nineteen !

Montezuma summoned his nobles and tributary lords, and, at the suggestion of Cortez, explained to them his reasons for believing the Spaniards to be the long-predicted "children of the sun," and the King of Spain the lawful descendand of Quetzalcoatl, god of the air, who were to return to Mexico to rule the country. This, it is stated that he told them; but there is every reason for believing that this god-of-the-air theory had long since exploded, so far as it could be applied to the Spaniards. Far from exhibiting that love for peace and desire to promote happiness, which were attributes of the god of the air, they had shown themselves men of blood, full of lust, and fit servants of that prince of darkness who is supposed to reside in the depths of the infernal regions. However, Montezuma was now a willing tool in the hands of Cortez for the enslaving of his people. He repeated to his nobles what the Spaniard directed, and they assented, declaring themselves vassals of the new king, though with sobs, and sighs, and groans, weeping and lamenting the fall of their own mighty empire. Now a slave, Montezuma had done his best to rivet the fetters upon the limbs of his faithful subjects. Low, indeed, had now sunk the great and terrible Montezuma!

Other indignities were in store for him and for his people. The treasure of Axayacatl, his revered father, was now requested of him, as tribute to that unknown being beyond the sea; he gave it. "Take it," said he, when Cortez informed him that some of the soldiers had been pilfering from it — "take it all; provided they do not touch the images of the gods, nor anything destined for their worship, they may take as much as they please." And take it they did, we may be very sure. They were three days sorting and distributing the articles of gold, which were wrought in elegant shapes. Most of it they melted

down, but there were some rich ornaments of such exquisite workmanship that even these savage soldiers had respect for their great beauty, and resolved to send them to the King of Spain as they were. It was all weighed and divided, and it was thought that, exclusive of the gold and silver ornaments reserved, there was the value of 60,000 crowns in gold alone! In dividing it the cunning Cortez took good care that he and his captains should secure the lion's share. He first laid aside one-fifth for the king, another fifth for himself, another portion towards the expenses of the expedition, another for some imaginary agents in Spain, another for the soldiers in Vera Cruz — who never got it! — a goodly share for each of the captains and the "reverend father of mercy;" so that when it came down to the poor soldiers of the rank and file there was nothing worth having.

The captains got the native goldsmiths to make them chains of gold, and Cortez ordered a golden service of plate; but the miserable soldiers soon gambled away what little they had obtained with cards, which they made from a worn-out drumhead.

Montezuma also had sent out guides with small parties of Spaniards, who found out all the rich gold mines and rivers containing golden sands, so that there was soon collected an amount of treasure almost beyond calculation.

"Take this gold," said he, "which is all I now can collect on so short a notice, and also the treasure which I derived from my ancestors, and which I now give you, and send it to your monarch; and let it be recorded in your annals that this was *the tribute of his vassal, Montezuma.*"

With noble scorn, he looked upon the quarrels of these freebooters over a little gold; with noble disregard of wealth, he gave these ruffians all he had — all the accumulations of his ancestors for generations past! Yet, they

were not satisfied; though they pulled off their helmets in his presence and obsequiously thanked him for these royal gifts, doubtless they would have served him as they later did his nephew, *Guatemotzin*, — have burned his feet to a crisp, — if more gold could have been extracted from him in this way.

Now the Spaniards were exultant, but their rejoicings were of short duration. The nobles had at least succeeded in awakening the people to a sense of the degradation of their monarch, and the necessity of expelling these foreigners from their country. The priests at last informed Montezuma that the gods looked upon his conduct with disapproval, that they had threatened to withhold rain and to destroy them entirely unless the Spaniards were driven forth. His nobles also had consultations with him, in the last of which they had told him it was impossible to restrain the people longer.

Cortez was sent for and the unwelcome intelligence communicated to him, in a constrained manner, by Montezuma. After many expressions of affection and regret, he said, "Hitherto I have willingly entertained you at my court, have even been so desirous of the pleasure of your company and conversation as to live here amongst you. As for my own part, I would retain you here without any charge, daily making you experience some fresh proofs of my good-will towards you; but it cannot be done, neither will my gods permit it, nor my subjects endure it. I find I am threatened with the heaviest punishments of heaven if I let you remain any longer in my kingdom; and such discontent already prevails among my vassals that unless I quickly remove the cause it will be altogether impossible to pacify them. Wherefore it is become necessary for my own safety as well as yours, and the good of all the kingdom, that you prepare yourselves to return to your native country."

Though greatly enraged at this command, and really fearful that it might be enforced, Cortez suggested an expedient for delay, requesting time to build three ships to carry him and his troops from the country. He promised to leave as soon as they were done, and at once despatched his carpenters to the coast, hoping that something might occur meanwhile which would enable him to remain.

It was not long after that Montezuma sent for him again, telling him with joy that he need defer his departure no longer, as a fleet of eighteen vessels had arrived on the coast. Cortez examined the paintings by which this news was conveyed, and found it was really true. He was at first rejoiced at this, as was Montezuma, for he imagined these vessels to contain reinforcements and munitions of war from Cuba or San Domingo; but when letters arrived from the governor of the port he found out his mistake — it was an armament sent *against* him instead of for him.

There were eleven ships, seven brigantines, eighty-five horses, eight hundred infantry, five hundred sailors and a great quantity of ammunition, all under the command of Panfilo de Narvaez, a noted soldier, who afterwards perished in Florida. This vast armament was sent by Velasquez, Governor of Cuba, against Cortez, as a rebel and traitor to the King of Spain.

Then did this intrepid man exhibit the stuff that he was made of; he received the news without flinching, in the presence of Montezuma, and told him the arrival was that of expected succor. But Montezuma soon had truthful reports as to the nature of the expedition, as Narvaez sent to inform the king himself that he had heard of the indignities that had been heaped upon him, and was coming with his army to rescue him, and to punish Cortez and his brutal soldiery.

The wonderful energy and courage of Cortez sustained

him in the demand now made upon him for extraordinary exertion and sagacity. He soon decided upon a course of action; he tried to effect with Narvaez a junction of forces against the Mexicans as a common enemy, or division of the territory between them; in both of which he failed. Narvaez would listen to nothing; he would seize Cortez as a traitor and send him to Cuba.

Then Cortez acted. Leaving but one hundred and forty soldiers as garrison in Mexico, he took two hundred and fifty and started for the coast, passing through Cholula and Tlascala. It was a distance of quite two hundred and fifty miles, but he soon traversed it. With his trained and war-scarred veterans he attacked the forces of Narvaez, encamped in the town of Cempoalla, and defeated them. Two hundred and fifty men captured four times their number! Not many were killed, some were wounded, and Narvaez himself lost an eye. It was a gallant fight on the part of Cortez' men, but the army of Narvaez was disaffected. Cortez had secretly despatched messengers to the principal officers with rich presents; the soldiers had been told of the immense booty awaiting them if they should join him and march with him to Mexico; and last, "our reverend father of the Order of Mercy," Parson Olmedo, had been among them, with the gold of Cortez in his hand and his own oily tongue in his head, both which were used to the best advantage of his commander.

Cortez now commanded nearly two thousand men, eighteen vessels and nearly a hundred horses. He was himself again, with fortune smiling upon him. He prepared troops and expeditions to explore the coast and establish colonies, and was about setting in motion a train of great discoveries when evil news came down from the table-land, from Mexico, two hundred miles away.

Among the captains of Cortez there was one named

Alvarado, a man brave even to rashness, fiery and impulsive. He had been left in charge of the one hundred and forty men, at the departure of Cortez for the coast, with the admonition to act prudently and to do nothing to offend the Mexicans.

He had been a favorite with Montezuma and his attendants because of his jovial disposition and pleasing manners. They had bestowed upon him the appellation, *Tonatiuh* — the sun — because of his fiery hair and ruddy complexion.



PEDRO DE ALVARADO.

To *Tonatiuh*, then, Cortez had left the command of the little garrison, recommending him to Montezuma and the nobles. While Cortez was away, the feast of the War God fell due, in the month of May, and as it was customary for the king to dance with the priests and nobles at this festival, the latter sent to Alvarado asking that he would allow Montezuma to join them in the temple for that purpose. Alvarado refused this request, and so they swallowed their indignation and performed the ceremonies in the courtyard

of the palace in which Montezuma was confined and which the Spaniards and Tlascallans occupied. Here were several hundred of the highest order of nobility, wearing their richest ornaments and dressed in most gorgeous garments. Whether it was that the avaricious Alvarado desired to secure the wealth of ornament that the nobles wore, or whether he was incited by the suspicious whispers of the Tlascallan allies, is not known; but, for some wicked reason, he fell upon them with his troops and massacred them all! Unsuspicious of danger, and excited with the religious performances of their sacred dances, the nobles became so fatigued that they could offer no resistance to the fierce Spaniards, and fell like sheep before a pack of wolves. Blood flowed in streams; their piteous cries for mercy, their groans, their dying shrieks, filled the air. When all was over, Alvarado and his men stripped their innocent victims of their gold and jewels, and thrust their bodies into the street or buried them in the court.

After the first thrill of horror at this revolting deed an ominous silence pervaded the city; then there ensued the gathering of a mighty storm; the outraged people assembled and dashed against the palace with the fury of a whirlwind. They beat down the walls and poured through the breach, and were beaten back by the artillery and musketry only to return again and again. Surely the Spaniards would have been utterly destroyed had not the recreant Montezuma showed himself upon the walls, and begged his people to desist from further attack. Sullenly they withdrew, resolved to exterminate the villains by famine, and cut off from them their supplies.

This was the condition of things when the messengers reached Cortez. With all his troops, and in forced marches, he hastened to the rescue.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DISASTROUS RETREAT FROM MEXICO.

[A.D. 1520.] WITH thirteen hundred Spanish infantry, two thousand Tlascallans, and near one hundred horse, Cortez, a second time, entered the Aztec capital, on the twenty-fourth of June, 1520.

Montezuma hastened to meet him, congratulating him upon his return with augmented forces; but Cortez, either swelled with pride, or affecting to believe the king guilty of having secretly treated with Narvaez, ignored him entirely. Grieved and angry, Montezuma retired to his quarters. It having been stated to Cortez that the failure in the supply of provisions was owing to the imprisonment of Cuitlahuatzin, he was induced to release him; an act fatal to the Spaniards, as subsequent events will show. It is thought that Cortez had under his command at this time an army, including the Tlascallan allies, of about nine thousand men. Cuitlahuatzin was brother to Montezuma, and general of the Mexican armies, which, upon his release, he at once commenced to assemble. On the very next day the Spaniards were made sensible of their error in releasing this brave prince, as the populace stormed their quarters, and sent in upon them such a tempest of darts and arrows that the pavement of the court and the terraces were completely covered with them. A force sent out to repel them was driven back with loss, and upon a second attempt were drawn into an ambuscade, the Mexicans affecting to retreat, and then turning upon them and inflict-

ing great slaughter. They set fire to the roofs of the palace, opened a breach in one of the walls, and poured into it with such tumultuous fury that they were only driven back by the incessant play of the Spanish artillery. On the morning of the next day, the twenty-sixth of June, the Mexicans renewed the fight with terrible energy. Cortez sallied out with the whole force, but though he destroyed great numbers of the enemy, he was forced to retreat with considerable loss. Montezuma, from a terrace of the palace, saw his brother fighting at the head of the Mexican troops, and this sight filled him with anguish and despair. He saw in the victory of either party the loss to him of his throne, and probably of his life; but, true to his sympathies with the Spaniards, and magnanimously ignoring the great affront put upon him by the Spanish commander, advised Cortez to secure, if possible, his retreat. Cortez, though he had so recently scorned the friendly offices of the deposed emperor, gladly listened to this advice, upon which, however, he was unable to act. He was unable even to make an impression upon the multitude of his foes, though the artillery and musketry mowed them down in heaps. In such vast numbers did they come that they boasted they could afford to lose a hundred lives for every Spaniard killed; indeed, they considered that number a cheap sacrifice for the death of one of their hated foes. Not only in the great square and in the streets did the Spaniards suffer from the missiles of the Mexicans, but a galling fire was turned upon them, in the court of the palace, from the neighboring roof-tops and terraces. In order to protect his soldiers from the annoying fire, Cortez constructed three large machines, called *manias*, each one large enough to contain twenty soldiers, and mounted on wheels. With these he hoped to be able to approach the houses and walls under cover, but upon the first trial they

proved ineffective, for the huge stones thrown against them crushed the roofs and the soldiers beneath them. The most disastrous and deadly discharge of arrows and darts now came from an unexpected quarter. Towering above the great square and above the palace, which bounded the western side of this square, rose the vast temple-pyramid. Upon the summit platform of this massive structure, five hundred Mexican nobles fortified themselves, and from it launched a shower of arrows, stones, and darts. This commanding position it was necessary should be taken, and Cortez sent a hundred men against it, who were finally driven back after three vigorous attempts. Then he determined to lead the assault in person, and though suffering from a severe wound in his left hand, he tied his shield to his left arm, and, brandishing his sword, called upon his men to follow. Furious at this attack upon their sanctuary, the Mexicans rallied about their imperilled nobles in vast numbers; four or five thousand rushed immediately into the enclosure and up to the steps of the great pyramid, defending it with lances, slings, and javelins. The fight waged here was the bloodiest that had yet taken place; the carnage was awful; the smooth and polished pavement of the enclosure was slippery with human blood, so that the horses of the cavalry could not keep their footing, and upon the infantry devolved the burden of the battle. Animated by a common resolve to defend their nobles, their priests, and their gods, now in such imminent danger, the Mexicans fought with incredible bravery. Step by step the Spaniards ascended the terraces of the temple, every man covered with blood, and engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with the defenders. At last they reached the broad platform of the pyramid, where were gathered the priests and the flower of the Mexican nobility, who, reduced to their last extremity, fought with the desperation

of despair. It was of no avail, the mail-clad warriors, in their coats of impenetrable steel, bore everything before them; and though it was three hours before the termination of this dreadful conflict, they finally succeeded in setting fire to the temples of the gods. Though some writers have affirmed that every priest and noble here perished at the point of the sword, it seems more probable that, after setting fire to the adoratories, the Spaniards retreated, pursued unrelentingly by the remnant of the nobility. At least, they were soon driven to their quarters in great confusion, with the loss of fifty killed, and nearly all the survivors covered with wounds. The greater part of this heroic action was carried on upon the summit of the pyramid, more than one hundred feet above the pavement of the square, and many of the combatants were hurled from the terraces, and trampled upon by the fighting crowd below.

They found their quarters partially in possession of the Mexicans, whom with great difficulty they succeeded in driving out. They had beaten down the walls, and the night was spent in repairing the breaches, burying the dead, and caring for the wounded. Their prospects were dismal in the extreme, for their provisions were nearly exhausted, each soldier having but half an allowance, nearly all of them were wounded; and while their numbers steadily diminished those of the enemy continued to increase.

The next morning the enemy renewed the attack, endeavoring to set fire to the buildings, storming the walls, and showering upon them countless thousands of stones and arrows. They even penetrated into the great court of the palace, engaging the Spaniards hand to hand; in this extremity Cortez sent to Montezuma desiring him to show himself to his subjects and try to induce them to

desist from their attacks. The scorned and insulted monarch, plunged into the deepest dejection, at first refused, saying, "I neither desire to hear him, nor to live any longer, since it is on his account I have been reduced to this unhappy fate." But he was at length persuaded to exhibit himself, and, attended by some of the soldiers, he went out upon the terraced roof in sight of his people below.

As soon as they perceived him, the chief and nobles commanded their troops to refrain from the attack. The tumult ceased, and in silence, many of them on bended knees, the multitude awaited what he had to say. His first utterance, requesting them to disperse and return to their homes and allow the Spaniards egress unmolested from the city, showed them that his heart was still with the hated visitors who had him in their power. He was soon interrupted, and four of the principal nobility, advancing, reproached him with his effeminacy, telling him that they had raised his brother to the throne, that they had promised their gods never to desist until the Spaniards were totally destroyed; but that they prayed daily for his safety, and as soon as they had rescued him they should venerate him as before. They had, however, no sooner finished their speech, than one of the Mexicans, thought to have been a nephew of Montezuma, commenced to revile him, lamenting the misfortunes of his family, and in the heat of his anger let fly an arrow at him. This was but a signal to the populace, who had stood undecided what to do, and immediately their stones and arrows rained like hail about the person of his majesty. Sacred no longer from the attacks of those who had once held him in fear and reverence, and without the protection of the shields of the soldiers, who, now too late, sprang forth to interpose them, Montezuma was wounded. A stone struck him on the

head, another on the leg, and an arrow pierced his arm, and, bruised and bleeding, he was borne below. There he lingered a few days, refusing all nourishment, assistance and sympathy, until death finally came to his relief. Thus perished the great Montezuma, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the eighteenth of his reign, after having been six months a prisoner.

Weak as he was in the defence of his people, superstitious and cruel as he was in the practice of his religion, we cannot but lament this unfortunate termination of his life. In many noble qualities he far transcended those men by whom he was surrounded at the time of his death, who, though they had made him prisoner, bewailed the departure of a being so generous and so magnanimous. Of his children who survived him, three perished on the terrible night of the retreat, while from two others, a son and a daughter, descended the noble houses of Montezuma. The kings of Spain "granted many privileges to the posterity of Montezuma on account of the unparalleled service rendered by that monarch in voluntarily incorporating a kingdom so great and rich as Mexico with the crown of Castile."

His body was delivered to the nobility, who, with much mourning and lamentation, burned it with the usual ceremonies, and the ashes were buried at Chapultepec. The people now attacked the besieged with greater violence, if possible, than before, threatening them that within the space of two days they should all pay with their lives for the death of their king, for they had chosen a sovereign whom they could not deceive as they had the good Montezuma. Notwithstanding the fact that the Spaniards made frequent sallies from the palace into the city, in one of which they destroyed many houses and barricades, they could not succeed in opening a clear road for their retreat.

The death of Montezuma occurred on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth of June; on the first of July it was determined, by Cortez and his captains in council, to retreat from the city. The preparations for that event were immediately commenced. The road to Tacuba, a town on the mainland, being the shortest, was selected as the route of departure. As the bridges crossing the several canals had been removed by the Mexicans, Cortez ordered a bridge of wood to be made, which, carried by forty men, could be laid across the ditches as necessity might require. Owing to the predictions of an astrologer, contrary to the dictates of military science, it was decided to commence the retreat at night, in as secret a manner as possible, after the Mexicans should have desisted from their daily attack upon the palace. The gold and treasure of Montezuma was brought into the great saloon, and after entrusting the fifth belonging to the King of Spain to the proper officers, Cortez gave permission to his soldiers to load themselves with the remainder, cautioning them, however, that such a burden might prove their death during the retreat, and that it would be much better to abandon it all to the enemy. Unheeding his advice, many of the soldiers loaded themselves heavily with the treasure, and were the first to fall in the pursuit that soon followed.

[A.D. 1520.] A little before midnight, on the first of July, the army of the besieged emerged from the gates of the palace. In advance went the bearers of the temporary bridge, in charge of a detachment of five hundred men; the vanguard, commanded by the indomitable Sandoval, consisted of two hundred infantry and twenty cavalry. Next came the prisoners, the servants, females and baggage, protected by a hundred infantry and several hundred of the allies; the rear-guard, containing a greater portion of the Spanish troops, was in charge of the dashing Alvarado.

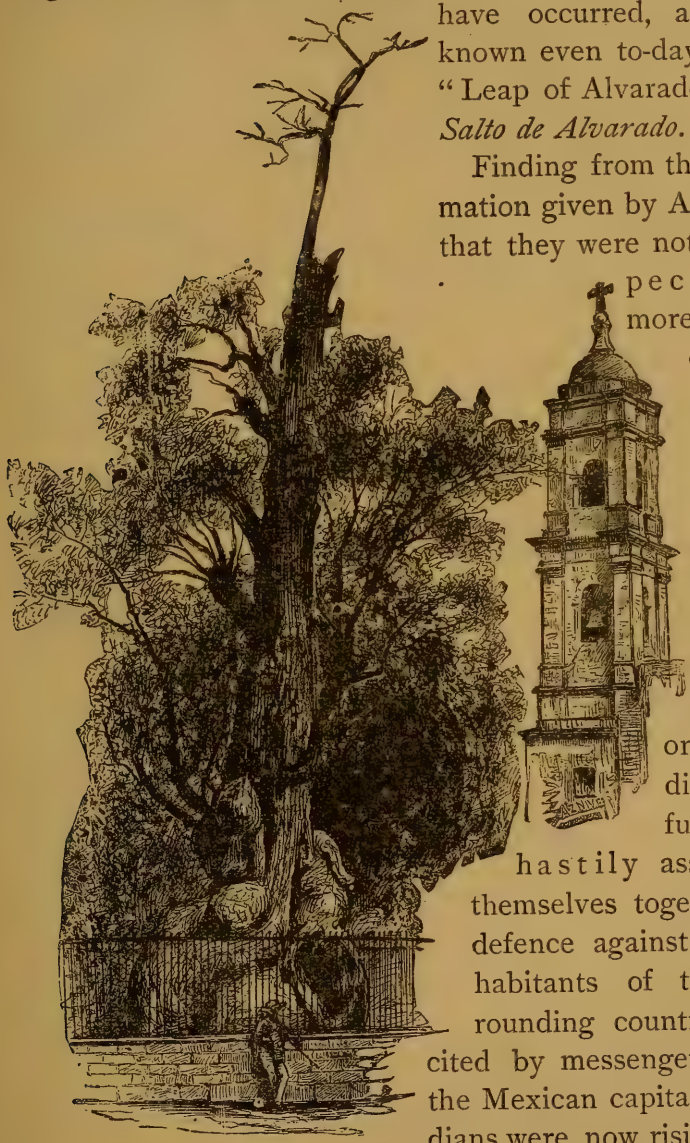
Cortez and a few chosen officers galloped along the line ready to render assistance where it was most needed, while the great body of the allies was distributed amongst the three divisions of the army. The night was dark and rainy, and hid their operations from the enemy, but it was impossible, of course, to conceal the departure of such a host, of nine thousand men, with artillery, horses, and baggage, from their wary and suspicious foes.

They crossed the great square in silence and in safety; they reached the first canal, where the portable bridge was placed in position; the artillery, some of the cavalry, and the Tlascallans in charge of the king's gold, the vanguard, Cortez, and many of his officers, had crossed the canal, when their ears were saluted by dismal sounds. The alarm was given; the priests watching on the temple gave notice to the people by blowing trumpets and sounding the great drum of serpent-skin that hung above the altar of their war-god. They were instantly attacked by the enemy, who sprang like apparitions from the lake, from the canals, from canoes, and from every street. All was confusion, the rear-guard, dashing forward to escape the multitude of enemies that now fell upon them, crowded upon those in front; cavalry, artillery, baggage, prisoners, infantry, all were driven together in a struggling, disorganized mass. The vanguard was halted by an open canal in front, behind the rear-guard was the wooden bridge, but so wedged and fastened in position by the weight that had passed over it, that it was impossible to remove it. The slaughter that then ensued was horrible; completely at the mercy of the Mexicans, the unfortunate Spaniards and their allies were pierced with lances and arrows, hewn down with swords taken from their own soldiers, and hundreds of them taken prisoners and hurried off to be sacrificed to the Mexican deities. Then was the dead emperor avenged; then did

the Mexicans glut their long-repressed desires for blood. Upon the night air rose the shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying, and the appealing cries of the unfortunate victims, who were dragged into the canoes and carried off to be murdered upon the sacrificial stone. The second canal finally became so filled with the dead and dying, horses, baggage, and artillery, that those remaining alive in this terrified throng found a passage over them across the water and hurried along the causeway to the third canal. This soon became filled like the other with dead and wounded prisoners and soldiers, and over this horrible bridge the wretched remnant of the army escaped to solid land. Cortez and his captains, those who were at liberty to do so, clapped spurs to their horses and galloped along the causeway.

In the courts of a small place called Popotla, the remains of which may be seen at this day, the survivors of the vanguard halted to await information of their miserable comrades. Cortez and a few of the cavalry went back as far as the first canal, and there met the captain, Alvarado, wounded and on foot, limping along with his lance in his hand. He had with him but fifteen or twenty soldiers of the rear-guard, and they told Cortez it was vain to wait for more, as all had perished. When Cortez learned this it is said that the tears ran from his eyes, for there were in the rear-guard nearly one hundred and fifty of his bravest soldiers, besides one of the most gallant of his captains, Velasquez de Leon, whom he dearly loved. Alvarado told them that, after the horses had been killed, about eighty of them collected in a body and forced the second canal upon the corpses of the slain; he, himself, if we may believe his own story, saved his life by a tremendous leap; placing his lance at the bottom of a canal he vaulted across the broad space to the other side. This story, whether false or true,

has given a name to the place where this event is said to have occurred, as it is known even to-day as the "Leap of Alvarado"—*el Salto de Alvarado.*



TREE OF LA NOCHE TRISTE.

Finding from the information given by Alvarado that they were not to expect any more of their companions, as the causeway was full of Mexican warriors, these distressed fugitives hastily assembled themselves together for defence against the inhabitants of the surrounding country. Incited by messengers from the Mexican capital, the Indians were now rising upon all sides of them, and it seemed as if no power on earth could save them from total annihilation. There is in this little village where

they made their first halt, near the present town of Tacuba, a giant cypress-tree, beneath which, it is said, Cortez sat awhile and wept at the loss of his soldiers. That terrible night of the retreat being known as *la Noche Triste* — or the sorrowful night — this great cypress, still standing, is called "the tree of the sorrowful night."

Well may Cortez have wept, not only at the loss of his soldiers, but at the almost total ruin which had overtaken his army. More than one-half of the Spanish army had fallen, more than four thousand of their Indian allies, almost all the prisoners, and the men and women who were in the service of the Spaniards. Four of their most noted captains also had been killed, and among the prisoners slain were a brother, a son, and two daughters of Montezuma, a daughter of Prince Maxicatzin, and finally, the noble Cacamatzin, King of Tezcoco, who had been deposed by Cortez and Montezuma. Among the officers left to Cortez were his brave and trusty captains, Sandoval, Alvarado, Olid, Ordaz, Avila, and Lugo, and besides these his interpreter, Aguilar, and his mistress, Marina.

Dejected, wearied, most of them bleeding from terrible wounds, the unfortunate Spaniards made their way into the country. Had the Mexicans then pursued them they would have been entirely destroyed, not a life would have been saved; but for some unaccountable reason they ceased their pursuit at the end of the causeway, returning to care for the wounded and pay funeral honors to the dead.

Nine miles west of the capital of Mexico is a hill, which the Spaniards reached on the day after the defeat, and where they fortified themselves for the night; here they obtained a little repose and a small amount of food from the neighboring Indians. Many years later, a small chapel was erected here in memory of their deliverance. The next day they were so famished that they ate a horse which

had been killed that day by the enemy, and the Tlascallans threw themselves upon the earth to eat the roots of the grass, imploring the assistance of their gods. By general consent they directed their way towards Tlascala, many miles distant, a single Indian their only guide. They proceeded but slowly, impeded by the wounded and continually annoyed by the enemy.

Several days had passed, when they reached the plain of *Otumba*, not far from the great pyramids of the Sun and Moon, — see Chap. II., pp. 35, 36, — and here they beheld a sight that caused them justly to fear that their last days had come. The whole plain was covered with the hosts of the enemy, not less, it is thought, than one hundred thousand in number, who presented a most glorious appearance, with waving plumes and weapons shining in the sun. To the Spaniards it seemed hopeless to attempt even to defend themselves, but they formed their shattered ranks and bravely met the onset of their foes. It would have gone hard with them indeed had not Cortez at a critical moment killed the general of this immense army and seized their royal banner, upon which the superstitious Indians turned and fled. This was justly considered one of their most famous victories; but though they made great slaughter of the enemy they dared not pursue them far, and resumed their march to Tlascala, which they entered on the tenth day after their disastrous defeat. They were received by the Tlascallans with a kindness they had no reason to expect, for of the total number killed during the retreat from Mexico, more than four-fifths were natives of this republic. Though lamenting the deaths of their friends and relations, these devoted people did not do more than mildly blame the Spaniards, chiding them only for not listening to their warnings of Mexican treachery. They gave them their deepest sympathies, took them into their houses, furnished them with nurses and surgeons, who cured their wounds,

and, thus protected and cherished by these noble Indians, the Spaniards slowly recovered from the effects of their late disasters.

Passing in review the losses sustained by the Spanish army we find the numbers of the slain variously stated, but they probably amounted, up to the time of their arrival in Tlascala, to not much less than nine hundred men, besides at least five times that number of their unfortunate allies. All the gold, except that saved for the king's portion, had been lost in the ditches of Mexico, and the soldiers found themselves impoverished, as well as wounded, and enfeebled by their long privations. The esteem and compassion of their hospitable friends seemed in nowise to abate after several weeks' residence, and even the prince, Maxicatzin, whose daughter had perished through their neglect, was their most ardent supporter. It was not long before the fidelity of the Tlascallans was put to a severe test by the arrival of an embassy from the King of Mexico, with a large present of cotton, fine feathers and salt, desiring that they would enter into an alliance with him to expel the murderous invaders of their soil. He urged that, although they had been enemies in the past, their unity of language and religious belief should unite them against this common foe, who, as they had seen, had violated every sacred law of honor, sacrificed the lives of their friends to their lust for gold, and had perfidiously murdered the great and generous Montezuma. If they would enter into such an alliance they should forever enjoy free commerce with their neighbors, and their gods would grant them success in every undertaking; but if, on the contrary, they should receive and harbor these bloodthirsty strangers, they should be forever accursed and branded with infamy. The Tlascallan senate disputed long and earnestly, but finally rejected these overtures of the Mexicans, and voluntarily renewed their allegiance as vassals to the King of Spain.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SIEGE OF MEXICO.

[A. D. 1520.] THE Mexican capital, during the time the Spaniards were recuperating at Tlascala, was a scene of incessant activity. Knowing the character of Cortez and his companions: that they would some day return to avenge their defeat, the inhabitants lost no time in putting their city in a condition to resist them. Undismayed by the distressing losses of the past year, the death of their king, and the greater part of their nobility, the destruction of some of their principal temples and important buildings, they bent every energy to the repairing of the ravages caused by the Spaniards.

Cuitlahuatzin, whom they had elected king to succeed his brother, Montezuma, was the general of the army, and a man of great talents and sagacity; his military skill and great bravery had given him a reputation throughout all Mexico; he exhibited his energy and talents for diplomacy by immediately despatching embassies to every province of the empire, promising to relieve from tribute all those who would unite in the defense of the crown. It was he who had sent the embassadors to Tlascala soliciting their allegiance. He repaired the buildings and fortifications of the capital; and it is believed that had he lived Mexico would not have been taken upon the return of the Spaniards.

[Summer of 1520.] Unfortunately, he reigned but a few months, for he soon fell a victim to small-pox, a disease that had been introduced into Mexico in the person of a

slave in the army of Narvaez; but one of the many curses brought by those adventurers from the Old World to the inhabitants of the New. This dreadful scourge spread throughout the whole Mexican empire, and many thousands perished, and in many instances whole towns and cities were depopulated. Though the Spaniards do not appear to have suffered much themselves from this dread disease they were the means of bringing to this unhappy country, yet many of their Indian friends, especially the Cempoallans, fell a prey to it, and many of the Tlascallans, including the great chief, their friend Maxicatzin.

As successor to Cuitlahuatzin the Mexicans chose his nephew, a spirited young man of about twenty-five years, named *Guatemotzin* as their king, and under this intrepid man, the eleventh King of Mexico, the capital was placed in a posture of defence. Cortez himself was not idle, for as soon as his wounds were cured by the Indian surgeons, he commenced preparations for a renewal of his designs upon Mexico. He sent to the coast for such reinforcements and supplies as the commander at Vera Cruz could spare, and in order to allay a feeling of discontent which was becoming general in the army, he marched his men upon the neighboring refractory tribes. He subjugated a province on the borders of Tlascala, the inhabitants of which had murdered some Spaniards on their way to Vera Cruz, and marched from city to city, inflicting great punishment, declaring many of their citizens slaves and branding them with hot irons. The people of these provinces all made a stubborn defence, in which they were greatly assisted by Mexican troops; but all to no avail; the Spaniards were soon masters of all the country about Tlascala, and opened unobstructed routes of communication, not only with the coast at Vera Cruz, but with the borders of the great lake of Tezcoco.

In one expedition, however, they lost one of their captains and eighty soldiers, which was a great offset to the victories they had gained; and others of the soldiers becoming discontented, Cortez sent them to the coast to take passage for Cuba. He despatched one of his captains to the island of Hispaniola for arms and reinforcements, and another to the court of Spain with a long letter to his sovereign, Charles V., describing his doings up to that time, and with a portion of the royal treasure saved from Mexico.

Several vessels arrived about this time with arms, ammunition and soldiers destined for a settlement on the river Panuco, and sent out by the Governor of Jamaica. As they reached the port of Vera Cruz these forces were easily diverted into the interior, joining Cortez, who found himself much strengthened and encouraged by this important addition to his command. Never for a moment had this intrepid leader abandoned his intentions upon Mexico, and he now drew reinforcements and accumulated supplies from every available quarter. He sent into the forests of Tlascala a noted man of his command, a most skilful shipwright, named Martin Lopez, with orders to get out timber for some brigantines. From the senate of Tlascala he obtained a hundred men of burden to be sent to the coast for the iron, sails, and rigging of the vessels he had dismantled the previous year. He obtained tar from the pine trees of the mountains, other material from various sources, and all this was finally transported to Tezcoco, where the brigantines were put together and launched upon the lake. He was now in command of forty or fifty cavalry and five hundred and fifty infantry; and, having resolved to make his headquarters at the ancient capital of Tezcoco, he set out for that place after having been joined by ten thousand Indians of Tlascala.

In two days they had passed through the mountains, and

on the twenty-eighth of December they again looked upon the beautiful valley of Mexico, from which they had been driven five months previous. As they approached Tezcoco they were met by a party of embassadors carrying a golden banner, which they presented to Cortez as a token of peace. They had been sent by Coanacotzin, King of Tezcoco, to invite the Spanish general to his court, and to request him not to commit any hostilities in his province. Though Cortez desired to capture the king, and to obtain revenge for the death of forty-five Spaniards and three hundred Tlascallans, who had been killed while passing through, laden with gold, silver, and arms for the Spaniards (at that time in Mexico), yet he returned him a message of friendship. Apprehensive of ill-treatment at the hands of Cortez, who had caused the death of his brother, Cacamatzin, and his uncle, Montezuma, the king fled to Mexico at night.

Among the prisoners who escaped the slaughter on the night of the retreat from Mexico was Cuicuicatzin, whom Cortez and Montezuma had placed upon the throne of Tezcoco and then removed, and who, having fled from Tlascala to the court of Tezcoco, was killed by this same brother, Coanacotzin. It seems, then, that his fears respecting the danger to his life from Cortez were perfectly justifiable, and that he did well in seeking protection at the Mexican court.

[Dec. 1520.] It was on the last day of December, 1520, that they arrived at Tezcoco, where they discovered things in a state of confusion; but some of the nobles came up to meet them and conducted them to one of the palaces of the late King Nezahualcoyotl, which was large enough to contain twelve hundred men. Here they saw those temples and palaces, which have been described in previous chapters, and ascending one of them some of the officers

beheld the women and children of the city fleeing to the lake border and hiding in the rushes and canoes. This warned Cortez to be upon his guard, as the people evidently meditated a revolt. Though he ordered his men to remain within their quarters and to commit no act of aggression upon the inhabitants, Cortez already had a large party in his favor in the friends of the youngest Prince of Tezcoco, Ixtlilxochitl, whom he now elevated to the vacant throne. This young man, whose warlike proclivities we have already referred to, was, next to the Tlascallans, the ablest ally of the Spaniards, and of essential service to them in the subjugation of the Aztec capital.

The city of Tezcoco, having been next to Mexico the most important in Anahuac, contained substantial houses and fortified temples and palaces. Situated upon the eastern shore of Lake Tezcoco, having in full sight the Mexican capital, but nine miles distant, and the broad plains behind it yielding sustenance for the support of a large army, this city was an advantageous position from which to conduct the siege of the city of the Aztecs.

No sooner was he well established here than Cortez sent out various expeditions to subdue different towns and cities about the lake. The first of these that felt the force of his arms was the beautiful city of Iztapalapa, the magnificent gardens and buildings of which had attracted the attention of the Spaniards on their first approach to the valley. The principal motive for the destruction of this city was that it had been the residence of the celebrated Cuitlahuatzin, who had been instrumental in driving them from the city of Mexico. He marched upon it with more than two hundred soldiers and three thousand Tlascallans, and entered the city, the troops defending it feigning a retreat, and the inhabitants fleeing to their canoes. While they were busy sacking the city and setting fire to

the houses an alarm was given that the streets were under water and the water of the lake rapidly pouring in upon them. Being situated between the two great lakes and intersected by canals it was only necessary in order to flood the city to cut the dikes, and this the self-sacrificing inhabitants had done, preferring the destruction of their homes to their occupation by the hated invaders. They would all have been drowned had it not been for the timely warning by the Tlascallan sentinels, and as it was, some were cut off, all their booty was lost, and the army returned to Tezcoco in very bad humor. The city of Chalco, on the eastern border of a lake of the same name, was next delivered from the Mexican troops which occupied it by an army under the gallant Sandoval, and renewed its allegiance to the Spanish king. This was one of the most important cities about the lakes, being a great resort of the merchants. It had been often in rebellion against the Aztec power, and gladly seized the opportunity of freeing itself from their dominion.

Information now coming down from the mountains that the timber for the brigantines was hewn and ready for transportation, Cortez sent Sandoval with two hundred men to guard its transportation to the lake. It was a long distance from the mountain forests of Tlascala to the borders of Lake Tezcoco, but the hardy natives, inured to fatigue, cheerfully carried the weight of this material, which was to contribute so much to the defeat of their enemies. Eight thousand Tlascallans carried on their backs the timber, ready shaped, for every part of the thirteen vessels. Two thousand were laden with provisions, and eight thousand more acted as a guard of defence. They were led by their valiant chieftain, Chichimecatl, until Tezcoco was approached, when Sandoval placed his men in the vanguard, and assigned the Indian chief the rear. This

gave great offence to the brave Chichimecatl, until it was explained to him by the Spaniards that in their country the rear was considered the post of honor, when his pride was pacified. Two days later this great body arrived at Tezcoco, which they entered in triumph, dressed in their finest regalia, wearing great plumes of feathers on their heads, and marching to the sound of horns, drums and trumpets. So long was this procession that they were six hours in entering the city, during which time they kept up their patriotic shouts of "*Castilla! Tlascala! Castilla! Tlascala!*"

The timber was carried to the edge of the lake and deposited at the docks, where the vessels were put together with the greatest expedition, though the workmen were constantly harassed by Mexican soldiers, who came across the lake in canoes, and made several attempts to destroy the ship-yards by fire. Owing to the vigilance of the King of Mexico, his troops were continually crossing the lake in their canoes and annoying the Spaniards and their allies, and every day skirmishes were passing between them. There was on the borders of the lake, not far from Tezcoco, a vast field of Indian corn, the produce of which usually went to the priests of Mexico. When it was time to reap the harvest the Mexicans crossed over in upwards of a thousand canoes, and attacked the allies who were engaged in gathering the corn with such vigor that they were only repulsed after a long and stubborn fight.

While the vessels were in process of construction, Cortez availed himself of the presence of the Tlascallan troops, some thirty thousand in number, to advance around the lake nearly to the city of Mexico. He even penetrated as far as the town of Tacuba, not three miles distant from the capital, and reached the famous causeway where, nine months before, he had suffered that fatal defeat. It came

near being the scene of a second disaster, for the Mexicans, feigning retreat, drew him along the causeway into an ambuscade, and then fell so furiously upon his troops that he only extricated them with the greatest difficulty. The Mexicans ironically invited them to enter their capital, assuring them that their priests were waiting to sacrifice them, and boasting that they would no longer find a Montezuma to deal with, but a king unaffected by bribes or threats. Cortez retreated to Tezcoco, followed by the Mexicans most of the way, who heaped insults upon his troops and attributed their return to cowardice.

The province of Chalco, lying south of Tezcoco, and southeast of Mexico, being rich and populous, was the scene of continual warfare between the rival forces, each struggling desperately for its possession. Several times its capital, the city of Chalco, had been the field of bloody strife between the Spanish and Mexican soldiers, for no sooner were the latter driven out than the indefatigable Guatemotzin again covered the lake with his war-canoes. At last Cortez resolved upon a general invasion of the province, and marching swiftly through the cities of Chalco and Tlalmenalco, he swept his army southward towards the vale of Cuernavaca. He everywhere encountered a determined resistance. At one point, in assailing a garrison entrenched on the top of a steep and rocky hill, the whole army was kept for a time powerless by reason of the great rocks which the Indians rolled down upon the heads of the assaulting party. At another engagement the slaughter was so great that the waters of a small stream near which it took place were tinged with blood for the space of an hour.

In the valley of Cuernavaca, nearly forty miles distant from Mexico, they found a city considered impregnable from the strength of its natural defences; surrounded on

every side but one by deep ravines, it could only be entered by means of bridges, which were raised by the inhabitants as soon as they caught sight of the enemy. While the army was hesitating, unable to advance and much annoyed by the insults and arrows of the Indians on the opposite bank, some of the soldiers, headed by Captain Bernal Diaz, crossed one of the ravines upon *two great trees*, which, growing upon opposite sides, locked their branches full forty feet above a rapid river. Many other soldiers then crossing upon this perilous bridge, the city was soon taken and given up to fire and pillage.

Having received the allegiance of the lord of this city, Cortez faced his army northward, in the direction of Mexico, his objective point being the large and beautiful city of Xochimilco, the fourth in the valley in point of size and population, and celebrated far and near for the magnificence of its buildings and the beauty of its floating gardens. Its inhabitants only yielded after a long and obstinate struggle, during which they killed and wounded many of the attacking force. The news of the fall of this great and important city, situated less than twelve miles from the capital, having reached the ears of the King of Mexico, he at once despatched to it two thousand canoes and an army of ten thousand warriors, who nearly succeeded in retaking it, killing many of the Spaniards and wounding a great number. They also captured four of them alive and sent them to Mexico to be sacrificed, which being done, their arms and legs were exhibited as trophies in various parts of Anahuac.

Having sacked the city, Cortez departed to examine the causeway of Iztapalapa, and thence marched upon the city of Coyohuacan, whence another causeway led to the city of Mexico. Leaving this city, which he found deserted, he swung his army past Chapultepec, to Tlacopan and Tacuba,

which he thus visited for the third time. Having viewed, from the summit of one of the temples of Tacuba, the ever-memorable causeway leading thence to Mexico, he departed for Tezcoco, constantly subjected to attacks from flying troops of the enemy. In this long expedition the Spaniards marched completely around the great lakes; and though their losses were large, nearly every survivor having received a wound, and Cortez himself having been severely injured and twice in danger of capture, what they had accomplished was of the most vital importance to the success of their future operations against the Mexican capital.

The brigantines were now completed and ready for launching, for which purpose a canal, a mile and a half in length, twelve feet deep, and twelve broad, was dug by the Indian laborers, eight thousand persons having been employed fifty days at this work. Ships, with arms, gunpowder, and reinforcements, had meanwhile landed on the coast and brought them valuable acquisitions; among them was "a very holy and reverend father," bringing with him "bulls from the pope" to compose the consciences of the soldiers for the murders they had committed, and were about to commit, in this war for the conversion of the unregenerate Mexicans. This "holy man" amassed a fortune in a few months, and soon returned to Spain to live at ease.

About this time a conspiracy was formed against the life of Cortez, a party having resolved to assassinate him while at dinner, but this was discovered in season and the chief conspirator hanged.

[April, 1521.] On the twenty-eighth day of April, the thirteen brigantines, which had cost such an immense amount of labor, and which were to play so important a part in the siege of the island-capital, were launched upon

the lake to the roar of artillery and the sound of military music. At a review of his army, made in the great square of Tezcoco, Cortez found it to contain eighty-six cavalry, seven hundred infantry, armed with sword and buckler and lance, and about one hundred musketeers and cross-bow men, with three large cannon, a thousand pounds of powder, fifteen small copper field-pieces, and a large supply of balls and arrows. Word was now sent to the allies, who quickly assembled to the number of seventy thousand men,



GONZALEZ DE SANDOVAL.

one of the towns in alliance also sending eight thousand arrow-heads of copper for the use of the cross-bow men. Having assembled this vast host at Tezcoco, Cortez issued his orders for their guidance. "First, no person to utter any blasphemy against the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin, the holy apostles, nor any other of the saints, under heavy penalties; second, no soldier to ill-treat the allies, nor to absent himself from his quarters under any pretence; every soldier to be fully provided with arms; no soldier to

stake his horse or arms in gaming; no soldier to sleep out of his armor nor without his weapons beside him; the penalty of death to be inflicted for sleeping at his post, absence from quarters without leave, or flight in battle."

[May, 1521.] On the twentieth day of May, the general-in-chief assigned the different divisions of the army to their posts about the valley: Captain Alvarado, with two hundred soldiers, twenty thousand Tlascallans, and two pieces of artillery, was appointed to Tlacopan; Captain Olid marched with Alvarado around the northern border of the lake, and beyond, to the city of Coyoacan, having about the same number of soldiers and cannon; Captain Sandoval was given a nearly equal number of horse, infantry, and cannon, in order to go and possess the city of Iztapalapa. Among the thirteen brigantines were distributed three hundred and twenty-five men; each vessel containing twelve soldiers, twelve rowers, and a copper cannon.

An unhappy incident occurred at this time which deprived the Tlascallans of one of their leaders and gave Cortez an opportunity for committing an arbitrary and revengeful act. Among the native nobles who accompanied Alvarado was the valiant general, Xicotencatl, the same who had resisted so manfully the entry of the Spaniards into Tlascala. When the Spaniards had sought refuge in that republic after their expulsion from Mexico he had advised the senate to seize the opportunity for ridding their territory of such dangerous allies, being one of the few wise enough to foresee the evil they would bring upon them. By this means, though he had now joined the Spaniards with the forces under his command, he had gained the enmity of Cortez, who only waited a fitting time to destroy him. This time had now arrived, for Xicotencatl, incensed at the insulting treatment of a friend, who had been wounded by a Spanish officer, secretly left

the army and set out for Tlascala. Cortez immediately sent officers in pursuit of him, giving orders to hang him as a traitor, which command was carried into effect in a small town near Tezcoco. The real motive for this outrageous proceeding appears, when we find that Cortez seized upon his family of thirty wives, and his property, a large part of which was jewels and gold.

The captains, Alvarado and Olid, continued together with their forces as far as Chapultepec, where, after a hard fight with the Mexicans, they destroyed the only aqueduct, which supplied pure water to the capital. Then they retreated to the positions respectively assigned them: Alvarado to Tlacopan, and Olid to Coyoacan, while Sandoval proceeded by land, and Cortez by water, to Iztapalapa, which place they carried by storm. As soon as they were in possession of the city, they perceived signals of smoke arising, such as had been sent up by the Mexicans when they entered the valley, and a large fleet of canoes filled with warriors came out against them. A fresh breeze springing up at this time filled the sails of the brigantines, and the Spaniards bore down upon the canoes, overturning many of them and destroying many others with shot from the cannon.*

Captain Olid was posted on a branch of the main causeway that led from Iztapalapa to Mexico, and setting his forces in motion he joined with Sandoval at the junction of these roads, where there was a strong fortress in possession of the Mexicans. The two captains attacked this stronghold

* In some descriptions of the launching of the brigantines of Cortez, great stress is laid upon the employment of sails, as though the Indians were not acquainted with their use. But Bernal Diaz, in describing the first that came out to them from Yucatan, says, "five canoes full of Indians came out with oar and sail," — *y venian a remo y vela.* And the canoe that Columbus saw off Guanaco in 1502 — "*Elle marchait à voiles et à rames.*" — BRASSEUR DE BOURBOURG.

by land, assisted by Cortez with his brigantines, and soon reduced it, committing a great slaughter of the garrison with their cannon. This place, known as *Xoloc*, Cortez at once seized upon for the establishment of his camp making it his headquarters until the close of the siege.



CHRISTOVAL DE OLID.

Every causeway except one was now in possession of the Spaniards, and this one, that leading to the north, was a few days later taken and held by Alvarado, thus rendering the investment of the city complete, and cutting off all communication, except by water, of the doomed inhabitants with the outside world.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY.

THE very day after he had become firmly fixed in his position, Cortez himself made an assault upon the city, Alvarado and Sandoval approaching it from their respective camps. Eighty thousand allies assisted them, yet they barely succeeded in penetrating to the great square, where they were attacked by such numbers of Mexicans that they fell back in confusion, leaving a cannon in possession of the enemy. The forces of their allies daily increased, until they soon amounted to above *two hundred and forty thousand.* The King of Tezcoco at last joined forces with Cortez, sending him an army of fifty thousand men. Day by day, the surrounding tribes sent in their allegiance to Cortez, until at last the intrepid Mexicans were left alone to struggle single-handed against the common enemy of their country. When he felt that he had his troops well in hand Cortez made another attack upon the city, penetrating again — though over ditches and entrenchments valiantly defended — to the square. Ten thousand of the allies busied themselves in filling up the ditches in the causeway, while others destroyed the houses bordering it. Among the buildings demolished on that day were several temples, the great palace of Axayacatl (in which the Spaniards had been quartered on their first entry), and Montezuma's aviary, or house of birds. At this time was commenced that systematic tearing down of the structures of the city and the filling of the canals with the *débris,* that

continued during the siege, and left little remaining of the splendid Aztec capital. A retreat to camp was with great difficulty effected, the Tlascallans carrying off the arms and legs of many Mexicans, which, we are told, they ate that night for their supper. It was impossible for Cortez to keep a garrison in the city to hold what he each day gained, owing to the fury of its defenders, so he instituted this system of daily advances from the outside posts, demolishing the buildings on the outskirts and laying waste as far as he went. Notwithstanding all his efforts to fill the ditches in the causeway, the Mexicans kept them open, removing everything at night that had been thrown into them during the day, and thus making them a great obstacle to a successful advance, and especially to a swift retreat. The first to seriously feel the disastrous effect of an advance into the city, with open canals in the rear, were the troops of Alvarado, who, in the heat of pursuit, penetrated as far as the market-place. When they had drawn them far enough the Mexicans turned upon them in such numbers that they fled in confusion. In passing one of the ditches, nearly fifty feet in width, several Spaniards were taken, and at once hurried to the great temple and sacrificed. As this terrible scene was enacted in sight of the army, it had a most depressing effect upon the soldiers, and taught them to act more cautiously. In spite of this dreadful warning, however, the zeal of the allies, and the impatience of the soldiers to get the treasures of the city into their hands, overcame their prudence. After twenty days of constant skirmishing, in which the gains, though slight, were sure, the Spaniards, wearied of their slow progress, pressed Cortez for a general assault. A council of war was held; it was decided to advance, from the three different posts occupied by Cortez, Sandoval, and Alvarado, upon the city, with the object of meeting in the great

square of the temple. All the Spanish forces, with over one hundred thousand of the allies, marched along the causeways, the brigantines and more than three thousand canoes protecting them on the flanks. Unknown to the Spaniards, the Mexicans had made elaborate preparations for their defeat. They had deepened the principal ditch, narrowed the causeway, and had posted a multitude of canoes in ambush near this difficult pass to sally out at a given signal to the attack. Induced by feigned retreats and the apparent cowardice of the Mexicans, the Spaniards eagerly pursued them as far as the great square, closely followed by their allies, wedged in dense masses upon the causeway. This was the moment for the wily Mexicans. Suddenly the sound of a trumpet issued from the temple of their war god. Inspired by this sound, the last call of the priests and nobles to arms, the Mexican troops burst forth from their places of concealment with incredible fury. The Spaniards and their allies could not resist this attack, and were at once thrown into confusion. At this fatal moment they saw the error they had committed, in allowing themselves to be drawn into the city without filling all the ditches that intersected the great causeway. Their allies only served to detain them in their retreat, and the Mexicans now slaughtered them without mercy. The canoes came out and fell upon their flank and rear, dragging the soldiers into the water, and hastening with them to the temple of sacrifice. Eighty were carried off in this manner, shrieking and vainly struggling in the clutches of their exulting foes. In the narrowest part of the pass Cortez was caught, was wounded in the leg, dragged from his horse, and came near being made a victim for sacrifice. If the enemy had not been so anxious to preserve him alive for an offering to their gods, but had only killed him when they had him in their power,

the siege of Mexico might have ended then and there. But while they were dragging him away, a brave soldier flew to his defence. With one stroke of his sword he cut off the arm of one of the captors, and killed four others, falling at last while gallantly fighting. A valiant Tlascallan, named Temacatzin, so ably seconded the efforts of De Oli that Cortez was rescued, placed upon a horse and hurried away towards his camp, his major-domo, Cristoval de Guzman, falling into the hands of the enemy in his endeavor to save him.

With the shattered remains of his army the wounded and dejected general finally reached his quarters on the causeway at Xoloc, pursued by the infuriated Mexicans to the very gates of the fortress. More than a thousand of the allies and eighty or one hundred of the Spaniards were killed, and several boats, a piece of artillery, and seven horses were lost.

Alvarado and Sandoval had not attacked so briskly as Cortez, and the Mexican troops that had defeated the latter turned upon them before they reached the centre of the city. As they neared them they threw down five bleeding heads, telling them they were those of Cortez and his officers; then they attacked the discomfited Spaniards so desperately that they fell back in disorder. It was usual, in case of retreat, for the Spaniards to clear the causeway of their allies to prevent confusion; but at this time, says the old historian, it was not necessary, "the sight of the bloody heads had done it effectually, nor did one of them remain on the causeway to impede our retreat." Exulting in such a glorious victory, the Mexicans cleared their city entirely of the last enemy; they repaired their defences, and passed eight succeeding days in feastings and rejoicings. They threw into the camp of Cortez other fresh and bleeding heads, telling him they were those of

Alvarado and Sandoval, which caused him great sorrow until he had ascertained by messengers that they were yet living.

The cause of this defeat was the same that had conduced to that former one of Alvarado — the neglect to fill up the canals as they advanced. Cortez sought to throw the blame upon one of his officers, though it undoubtedly lay at his own door. Now, in distress, with meagre food, and suffering from wounds, the Spaniards were obliged to rest upon their arms. The Mexicans carried on the sacrifices of their prisoners day after day, and the horrid sight was in full view of the whole army. We cannot do better than quote the relation of an eye-witness of those scenes, brave Bernal Diaz. He was in the detachment commanded by Alvarado, which was the last attacked, and the nearest to the great pyramid on which the prisoners were sacrificed. "Before we arrived at our quarters, and while the enemy were pursuing us, we heard their shrill timbals and the dismal sound of the great drum, from the top of the principal temple of the god of war, which overlooked the city. Its mournful music was such as may be imagined is that of the infernal gods, and it might be heard at the distance of almost three leagues. They were then sacrificing the hearts of ten of our companions to their idols. Shortly after this the King of Mexico's horn was blown, giving notice to his captains that they were then to take their enemies prisoners, or die in the attempt. It is impossible to describe the fury with which they closed upon us when they heard this signal. Though all is as perfect to my recollection as if passing before my eyes, it is utterly beyond my power to describe; all I can say is, it was God's will that we should escape from their hands and get back in safety to our post. Praised be He for his mercies, now and at all other times!"

At another time, as the soldiers were sitting at rest, engaged in relating the events that had happened, their attention was attracted by the sound of the great war-drum, and looking up to the temple-pyramid they saw a procession of their unfortunate countrymen being driven up the winding stairs, with cuffs and blows. Their white skins served to distinguish them from the Indians, and they saw them, after being subjected to every insult, thrown upon the sacrificial stone, their hearts torn out and their bodies thrown down the steps to the greedy people in waiting below. Their heads, arms, and legs were sent as trophies of Mexican valor to every tribe throughout Anahuac, with a warning to them to return to their allegiance unless they wished to be served in a similar manner. This so terrified the allies that they nearly all forsook Cortez and returned to their homes, all except a few of the bravest of the Tlascallan and Tezcocan nobles. At the suggestion of Prince Ixtlilxochitl, Cortez now changed his tactics, and came to the resolution to destroy the Mexicans by famine, rather than waste away his troops in fruitless attacks. The Mexican priests committed the great error of predicting the total destruction of the Spaniards within a certain number of days. Their gods had told them that within eight days they were to feast upon their flesh. But in this case the priests had assumed too much, they had made one prediction too many. They should not have assigned a limit to the time; for when Cortez heard of it he merely drew off his soldiers and rested during the entire period. As it expired, he caused the allies to be informed of it, and they came back, no longer having faith in Mexican forewarnings. Directly and indirectly (as we have seen) the priests were the cause of Mexico's downfall, even as they caused her repeated disaster in the centuries following her capture by the Spaniards.

Had not famine come to the aid of the besiegers it is doubtful if they would have so soon marched through the streets of Mexico as they did. Boats and brigantines kept constant watch about the doomed capital, preventing access to water and provisions. The Mexicans were fully as well versed as their foes in the mysteries of stratagem; they were their equals in bravery, superior to them even in the reckless disregard of their lives in defence of their homes. Had their weapons of defence been equal to those of the Spaniards, the history of Mexico would to-day be a different one from what it is. They early displayed their talent for the laying of ambuscades, into which the Spanish troops often fell, greatly to their loss. They now prepared a successful ambuscade for the brigantines, those large vessels which annoyed them so much on the lake, along the causeways, and around the borders of the city. They constructed some very large canoes, called *periaguas*, covered with thick plank. These they filled with fighting-men and concealed among the floating gardens in a portion of the lake where the Spanish vessels were cruising to intercept canoes coming from the mainland with provisions. In front of their ambuscade they drove large stakes, deep enough beneath the surface to be out of sight, and yet forming an obstruction upon which the brigantines would founder or stick fast. They then sent out small canoes as decoys, and when the brigantines pursued them they soon ran afoul of these sunken stakes; then, when they were in this helpless condition, the periaguas sallied out and did great mischief. They killed the captains of two vessels and wounded nearly all the crew before they could be extricated and the cannon on board brought into play. Attempting this again soon after, they were themselves drawn into ambush and many of their canoes destroyed.

The intelligence that guided their operations seems to

have been one superior to that which guided the Spaniards. With troops similar in number and equipment, Guatemotzin would have been more than a match for Cortez. If we read of any brilliant movement or piece of strategy executed by the Spaniards, we shall find upon examination that it was suggested by their observation of the superior skill of the Mexicans.

Among the prisoners captured at the second attack of the canoes were several nobles, who were sent by Cortez to Guatemotzin with a message of peace. They undertook this commission unwillingly, declaring that the fierce king would have them instantly put to death; but, though much enraged at them for bringing him such proposals, he spared their lives, and sent them back to Cortez with a message of defiance.

About this time news came from Cuernavaca and other frontier towns that the Malinalchese, instigated by the messengers of the Mexicans who had been sent to them with the heads of the Spaniards, were marching upon the besiegers with a large army. These were met and defeated by two detachments, and thus the last hope of the Mexicans of aid from without was taken from them. Their condition was most deplorable; they were now "forsaken by all their friends, surrounded by enemies, and oppressed by famine." Not only the Spaniards were arrayed against them, but nearly every native kingdom and republic lying between the sea and the gulf. Still they were undismayed, and to the overtures of peace sent them by the Spaniards returned only answers breathing defiance and threatenings of the vengeance they would take upon them when their gods should have delivered them into their hands.

The Tlascallan chief, Chichimecatl, made restless by the delay of the Spaniards to attack, one day entered the city with his own troops, carefully guarding the great ditch by

his archers, and after a protracted fight, made good his retreat, covered with glory, to the Spanish camp. The Mexicans revenged themselves for this insult by a night attack upon Alvarado, which, however, was repulsed with little loss. Just at this time, when their powder was running low, a ship arrived at Vera Cruz with a fresh supply, and, thus recruited, Cortez again commenced an advance into the city.

As he advanced he destroyed every building, leaving not one behind him. One hundred and fifty thousand allies accompanied him and performed this work of destruction. As these misguided wretches were employed at this work of demolition, the Mexicans taunted them : "Demolish, ye traitors," they shouted, "lay those houses in ruin, for afterwards you will have the labor of rebuilding them." And, in truth, they did ; though the Spaniards conquered, upon the allies who so faithfully assisted them fell the labor of reconstruction. Early were they made to feel the weight of the chains they were unwittingly forging for their own limbs !

On the twenty-fourth day of July the Spaniards obtained possession of the great road passing through the city from Iztapalapa to Tacuba, and three-fourths of the city was now in their hands. A few days later Cortez joined with Alvarado and Sandoval, as they came in from the other sides, and had the inexpressible satisfaction of completing this junction of forces, which he had so often attempted in vain. A great canal separated them from the district of Tlaltelolco, to which the besieged were now confined. In one of the temples, destroyed in the progress of the march, they discovered the heads of many of their soldiers, the hair and beards of which, says an old veteran, were much grown since placed in position on the beams of the Place of Skulls.

Repeated demands were made of the Mexicans to sur-

render, but they as often replied that they would continue the defence so long as one of them remained alive. Four days passed, during which crowds of wretched men, women, and children, emaciated and dying of hunger, came to the Spaniards and gave themselves up. The warriors were still unsubdued; by night and by day they made their assaults, but they were so exhausted by hunger that they accomplished little harm. At last Cortez gave the signal for a general assault, by the firing of a musket, and the eager troops and ferocious Indian allies fell upon the unarmed and half-starved wretches so fiercely that in one day twelve thousand, and in another forty thousand, perished. The common people were ready to surrender, though thousands of them were butchered as they fell into the hands of their enemies; but the priests and nobles, headed by their indomitable king, refused to submit. They prayed for death; "If you are the child of the sun," said they to Cortez, "why are you so slow in delivering us from our calamities by death?" Cortez sent to Guatemotzin an embassy with a present of provisions, and asking for a conference, but though returning assuring answers, that wily monarch was unwilling to trust his person within reach of one who had always hated him, and who had caused the murder of his uncle, Montezuma, though professedly his friend. Cortez promised him plenitude of power and honors if he would but surrender and thus terminate the bloody siege; but Guatemotzin only retreated farther into the fortified portion of his diminished capital, and stubbornly refused to listen to his words. Artillery was then brought up and trained upon the defenceless people crowded in the streets and beneath the porticoes of the buildings, and the allies again glutted their rage upon helpless men and women, who threw themselves into the canals, which became purple with the blood of the slain. In misery and woe they were perishing by thousands, when

it became known that the emperor, Guatemotzin, had escaped. The Mexican nobles had prepared canoes in which to flee, as a last resort, but Cortez had anticipated such a measure, and had ordered Sandoval, in command of the lake forces, to seize these boats and watch sharply for the royal barge itself. At the last moment, when defence was no longer possible, after he had exhausted every resource his ingenuity could suggest in resistance, the emperor, Guatemotzin, allowed himself to be led into a periagua, which, in company with about fifty others, set sail for the main land. Notice was at once conveyed to Sandoval, who was actively engaged in tearing down the houses, and who immediately despatched his swiftest vessel in pursuit. It soon came up with the royal barge, which was distinguished by its awnings and structure, and its captain, Garcia de Holguin, received the surrender of the ill-fated Emperor of the Aztecs. Guatemotzin had with him the King of Tacuba, Coanoctzin, the deposed King of Tezcoco, and other persons of rank, together with his wife and children. Entreating for them the consideration of the Spaniards, he took his queen by the hand and entered the brigantine.

From the terrace of a temple Cortez had witnessed the flight, the pursuit, and the capture. He awaited anxiously the arrival of the monarch, and as he came before him embraced him with the greatest show of affection. The unhappy emperor, laying his hand upon a dagger that Cortez wore at his girdle, begged him to deprive him of the life which he should have lost in defence of his people, and which was no longer of value to him; "I have done, *Malintzin*, that which was my duty in the defence of my kingdom and my people; my efforts have been of no avail, and now, being brought by force to you a prisoner, draw that poniard from your belt and stab me to the heart."

This he said with tears in his eyes and baring his breast to receive the fatal thrust. Cortez tried to reassure him, promising him his liberty in due season and a return of all the greatness which he had lost. Better had it been for the great-hearted emperor had his wish been carried into effect at that time, for he was reserved for torture and a disgraceful death by hanging, at the hands of this same deceitful captor! What he would not ask for himself he begged for his people, entreating Cortez that he would put a stop to the slaughter still going on. This he did, and when the bloodthirsty allies had been restrained, the miserable remnant of Mexico's once-numerous population was allowed to file out of the plague-smitten city into the country.

[A. D. 1521.] With the fall of Guatemotzin fell the capital, and the little resistance until then offered ceased. It was at the hour of vespers, on the thirteenth of August, 1521, that this was effected, and the Spaniards found themselves in possession of the prize for which they had so long and so desperately striven. That night, the soldiers fell back to their old posts, on the outskirts of the city, which they had occupied during the seventy-five days of the siege. Many thousands of the allies had been killed, and of their own number above one hundred had been killed and sacrificed. An immense number of the Mexicans perished, according to the best authorities, not less than *one hundred thousand*, and of the survivors there were few that were not afflicted with wounds and disease, the result of pestilence and famine. "I have read," says the soldier-historian, Diaz, "of the destruction of Jerusalem, but I cannot conceive that the mortality there exceeded this of Mexico; for all the people from the distant provinces which belonged to this empire had concentrated themselves here, where they mostly died. The streets,

the squares, the houses and the courts of Tlaltelolco were covered with dead bodies; we could not step without treading on them; the lake and canals were filled with them, and the stench was intolerable. For this reason, our troops, immediately after the capture of the royal family, retired to their quarters."

In order to cleanse the city the inhabitants were ordered into the country, the decaying corpses were buried, and great fires were kindled to purify the air. "For three days and nights the causeways were full, from one end to the other, of men, women, and children so weak and sickly, squalid and dirty and pestilential, that it was misery to behold them. Some miserable wretches were creeping about in a famished condition through the deserted streets; the ground was all broken up to get at the roots of such vegetation as it afforded, the very trees were stripped of their bark, and there was no water in the town. . . . During all their distress, however, though their constant practice was to feast on such as they took prisoners, no instance occurred of their having preyed upon each other; yet certainly there never existed since the creation a people which suffered so much from hunger, thirst, and warfare."

"Thus," says another historian, "did Providence, in conducting the Spaniards, a polished nation of Europe, to overturn the rude monarchy of the Mexicans, in America, punish the latter for the injustice, cruelty, and superstition of their ancestors. But there the victors, in one year of merciless massacre, sacrificed more human victims to avarice and ambition than the Indians during the existence of their empire had devoted in worship to their native gods. There the legislative art of Europe corrected the bloody policy of American tribes, and introduced the ministry of justice, by despoiling Indian caciques of their territories and tributes, torturing them for gold and enslaving their

posterity. There the mild parental voice of the Christian religion was suborned to terrify confounded savages with the malice of a strange, and by them unprovoked, God; and her gentle arm in violence lifted up, to raze their temples and hospitable habitations, to ruin every fond relic and revered monument of their ancestry and origin, and divorce them in anguish from the bosom of their country."

The plunder obtained did not come up to the expectations of the conquerors, and as the best part of the gold and treasure was sent to the King of Spain, the poor soldiers came out of this long and trying siege with nothing but wounds and sickness as their reward. The allies were dismissed well laden with plunder of garments and feathers, and with magnificent promises from Cortez of what he would later do for them. What he *did* do was to compel them to rebuild the city and labor for his enrichment!

At the quarters in Coyoacan a great feast was held, at which the soldiers "swore they would buy horses with golden harness, and the cross-bow men would use none but golden arrows." This was while they were under the influence of wine; but when they returned to their senses they discovered that their condition was but little better than that of their allies. When the revel was ended "the crucifixes and the image of Our Lady were borne in solemn procession, with drums and standards; the litany was sung during the ceremony; Fra. Bartholome preached and administered the sacrament, and we returned thanks to God for our victory." In this manner was the divine blessing invoked upon the destruction of a nation and the murder of millions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER THE OVERTHROW.

[A. D. 1521–1530.] GOLD and treasure were found in such small quantities that Guatemotzin, the late emperor, was suspected of having concealed it. The disappointed soldiers and officers had forgotten that they had exhausted the treasure of Montezuma during their first occupation of the city. From the plundering of the dead Mexicans and the sacking of empty houses they turned in disgust upon Cortez, demanding that he should compel the emperor to reveal the place where he had buried his treasure. Cortez, conqueror of a million Mexicans, intrepid leader of a band of adventurers, who had been the life and soul of this bloody enterprise, had not the courage to withstand the importunities of these assassins. They insinuated that he was treating Guatemotzin with kindness in order to obtain from him the valuable secret and appropriate the booty, and to clear himself of such suspicions he delivered the unfortunate monarch over to be tortured. It availed the Indian emperor little that Cortez had promised him protection; for he was to be served worse than had been his cousin, Montezuma. His feet were soaked in oil and burned over a slow fire; but this cruel act only extorted from him the confession that he had thrown the little remaining of his treasure into the lake. He bore the torture with great courage, even mildly rebuking a companion who shared it with him for weakly crying out. His life was spared for the time, but his friend died of the torment.

Expert swimmers and divers searched the places pointed out by Guatemotzin, but recovered nothing of value, except a sun of gold in a deep pond in his garden. The whole sum collected amounted to only three hundred and eighty thousand crowns, and, after deducting the shares belonging to the king and the officers, that falling to the soldiers was



BUST OF GUATEMOTZIN.

so small that few of them would take it. The most curious of the works of gold, some pearls, and a magnificent emerald, pyramid-shaped, the largest they had ever seen, — in fact, the greatest portion of the treasure, — was sent to the Emperor of Spain, Charles V. The ship containing it, and also messengers bearing letters from Cortez to the emperor,

was captured by a French cruiser and the valuable booty transferred to France. It was a cause of great sorrow and chagrin to the Spaniards to learn that this royal gift, which they had toiled so hard to obtain, which had cost so many lives, and for which they had even sacrificed their souls, had been diverted into the coffers of a strange king. The King of France and his subjects rejoiced greatly, and the former is said to have then had his eyes opened to the extent of the possessions of his brothers, the Kings of Spain and Portugal, in the New World. He sent over to them asking how it was that they had agreed to divide the world between them without giving him a share, and asked to see the will of our father Adam, by which he had made them exclusively his heirs.

The downfall of the Aztec capital was also that of the empire; the Spaniards were now masters of the entire territory, except certain remote portions, which they soon subdued. Indians from all parts of the country flocked to the vale of Anahuac to look upon the ruins of a city that had seemed to them impregnable. The great kingdom of Michoacan was the first to send embassadors to the conquerors. After sending several messengers, the king himself came to behold with his own eyes that which his ears refused to credit. He brought a large quantity of gold and pearls, and declared himself a tributary of the King of Spain. Spanish soldiers were sent back into his country, and through it to the coast of the Pacific, at Colima.

In two months the city had been cleansed and was ready for occupation. To the Indians, Cortez assigned one district, and to the Spaniards he gave another. That portion formerly occupied by the temples and royal palaces had been levelled to the ground; the remainder of the city was nearly in ruins. Buildings were repaired, and the work of construction immediately commenced; and (as predicted

by the Aztecs) the very Indians who had assisted in the demolition were compelled by the Spaniards to devote themselves to the labor of building up the new city. Substantial and beautiful structures were rapidly reared, and in a few years this ancient centre of trade and capital became again mistress of Mexico. In the Indian quarter of Tlaltelolco thirty thousand Indians found shelter, and two thousand families occupied the district assigned to the Spaniards.

Expeditions for conquest and colonization were sent east, south, and west. The gallant Sandoval was sent to Goatzcoalcos to punish some people who had murdered a party of soldiers, and to settle a colony. Finding that the vicinity of Mexico, though it had a most delightful climate, did not abound either in mines or rich plantations, many of the soldiers preferred to seek new territory. From the books which contained the accounts of the tribute paid in former years to Montezuma they ascertained the provinces richest in gold, cotton, and cacao, and begged of Cortez to send them there.

The natives of Panuco, northeast of Anahuac, rose in rebellion, and were only put down after a series of hard-fought battles, and the troops were called in other directions, rarely being allowed to remain inactive for any length of time.

[A. D. 1522.] In this year Captain Alvarado was sent to conquer the country of the Zapotecs, in the province of Oaxaca (pronounced Wah-hah-kah). This he succeeded in doing, completely subjugating the people of this rich and fertile valley, and procuring a great deal of gold. The natives even made for him *stirrups of gold*, after patterns he furnished them.

On the 15th of October of this year the emperor signed the commission of Cortez as Captain-General, Governor,

and Chief Justice of New Spain. He was now established in the position he had sought to obtain. In spite of the opposition of Velasquez, Governor of Cuba, and Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, who had sought to have him declared a traitor, arrested, and sent to Spain, the emperor now recognized the great value of his services, and justly rewarded them. From the time of the development of the enmity of Velasquez against him to this, he had remained loyal to his sovereign. In disconnecting himself from the Governor of Cuba, and making himself responsible directly to the emperor, he had ever in view the possibility of his motives being mistaken. He had, hence, used every endeavor to prove his fealty, to impress the emperor with the fact that all his conquests were in his name. For this reason he had despoiled the soldiers of their share of the captured treasure at Vera Cruz, at Mexico, before and after the capture, and sent a vast amount to the court. Charles V. could not be insensible to the fidelity and great value of the services of this remarkable man, who had added to his empire a domain larger than the whole of Castile. Cortez was also as expert with the pen as with the sword, as the letters written at various times during the conquest remain to testify. Immediately upon retiring from the ruined city to the suburb of Coyoacan, he sat down to write a most graphic and temperate account of the whole proceedings.

He had evaded the various officials sent out by the Governor of Cuba with authority of the king to arrest him or to suspend his operations, sending some away with bribes and others by force, and now he was in the position he had so long coveted, with all his acts sanctioned by the king, and accountable to him alone.

The first government was really a military one, with Cortez as chief, but there existed the *Ayuntamiento*, or

body of magistrates, first appointed by Cortez himself in Vera Cruz at the outset of his career of conquest. This body had authority over the distribution of land to colonists, the building of new cities, location of market-places, and the promulgation of laws for the health, order, and security of the new settlers. In a word, they were a very respectable body, and many of their ordinances and regulations have been observed in Mexico from 1522 to the present day.* Later, the *Audiencia*, composed of lawyers, generally five, under the name of *oidores*, dispensed justice and the laws. Then there were visiting and resident justices, and swarms of lawyers soon came over from the mother country to lend their assistance, notwithstanding the prayers of Cortez to the emperor that he would keep these pestiferous meddlers away from the colony.

The Aztecs, once subjugated, occasioned no more trouble; they were virtually slaves, as well as all the Indians of the country, except the Tlascallans, who were made exempt on account of their unequalled services in bringing the country under the dominion of Spain. By the iniquitous system of *repartimientos* — apportionments — that had for some years prevailed in the West Indies, and under which the Indians of Hayti became exterminated, the natives of Mexico were doomed to perpetual slavery! They were condemned to work in the mines, to cultivate the soil, to do the most degrading labor, in a country they had once owned and in which the Spaniards were usurpers. The misery of conquest only commenced with the surrender of the people, for more died under the lash of the task-master than by the sword. The Indians of the West Indies soon perished under the horrible cruelties practised upon them, but the Mexicans,

* "La mayor parte de las reglas y ordenanzas que dictaron los Ayuntamientos de Mexico desde 1522 en adelante, están todavía en observancia." — *Compendia de la Historia de Mexico.* PAYNO.

besides being by nature more hardy, later had the benefit of tardy laws, and their descendants exist to-day.*

The soldiers of one Francisco de Garay, who had attempted a settlement at the mouth of the river Panuco, were now roaming the country in bands, robbing and maltreating the Indians. These at last could endure it no longer and rose upon them, killing several hundred in all. When Cortez heard of these outrages, he despatched Sandoval with a hundred Spaniards and eight thousand Tlascallan and Mexican troops to punish and subdue them. This he did, after a desperate battle, and acting on the orders of Cortez, who sent an *alcalde* with legal instructions, he put to death many of the caciques, burning some and hanging others. In a short time quiet was restored, and the straggling bands of soldiers belonging to Garay, (who had meanwhile died in Mexico) were gathered together and sent back to the island of Cuba.

[Dec., 1523.] The most important of the expeditions sent out after the pacification of the empire was one, under Pedro de Alvarado, for the conquest of Guatemala. This was successfully accomplished after a great deal of hard fighting, and this vast province added to the Spanish possessions.

Another force was put under the command of Christoval de Oli, a brave captain, and sent by sea to Honduras. Cortez ever had in mind the discovery of a strait through the continent which might lead to the Spice Islands. Columbus had the same desire and followed this delusion southward, away from Mexico and Yucatan, the coast of which he saw but did not visit. De Oli arrived at his destination in May, and subjugated the country, but eventually threw

* We have not here space to notice the untiring efforts of the good Las Casas, Bishop of Chiapas, in behalf of the Indians of America. The reader interested in the history of the Spanish colonies should consult his Life.

off all dependence upon Cortez and conducted himself in such a manner as to bring down upon his head the latter's vengeance. Fighting was constantly going on in various parts of the country, especially in the south and south-west in the provinces of Tabasco, Oaxaca and Chiapas; but always resulting in Spanish victories and the bringing of the natives under subjection.



RUINS OP MITLA, NEAR OAXACA.

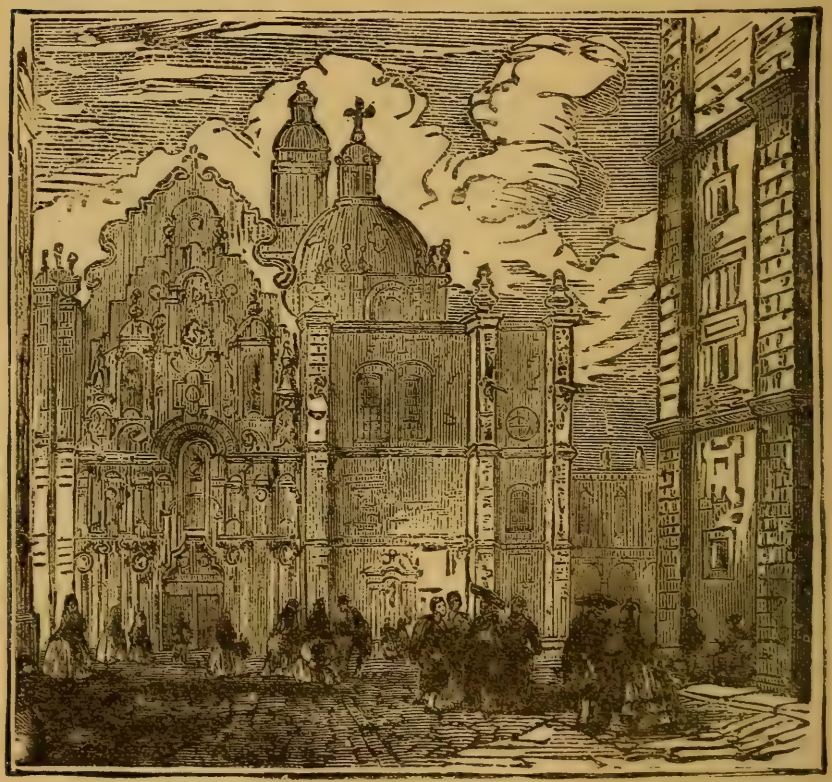
Although Cortez was industrious in establishing his well-earned reputation as conqueror of New Spain at the royal court, and in securing land-grants and titles for himself and his relations, he yet persistently ignored the claims of his old comrades in arms. He employed them to the last in battles and fatiguing marches, but did not reward as he

ought those valiant soldiers who had contributed to his elevation.

The tribute of gold was carefully hoarded and his majesty's fifth religiously set apart, for upon royal favor alone depended the stay of Cortez in power, even in the country which he had conquered by the force of his own arms. Among other royal presents especially worthy of note was a *golden culverin*, or small cannon, a superb piece of workmanship, engraved with a flattering verse in praise of Charles V. This was valued at twenty thousand ducats, but after it had ceased to be a novelty the emperor gave it to one of his officers. In compliance with the petitions of Cortez and his companions, priests and monks were sent as soon as possible to the new country, to conquer by the cross such as the sword had left. The first body of twelve Franciscans, though they came out as "poor brothers," barefooted and with ragged habits, were received with great state. Cortez gave directions for the road from Vera Cruz to the capital to be put in order, houses to be built at certain distances for them to refresh in, and for the inhabitants of every town to meet them in procession, with the ringing of bells and with candles and crucifixes. As they approached Mexico he went out to meet them, and kneeling at the feet of the leader, reverently kissed his hand. This example of humility had its due effect upon the natives, who henceforth regarded these barefooted beggars as gods, and flocked to their preaching in such multitudes that thousands were converted to the most holy faith in a single month.

[A. D. 1524.] Upon learning that De Oli had cast off his allegiance to him as Captain-General, Cortez sent another expedition to Honduras to kill him and take charge of the colony. The vessels were wrecked and part of the force destroyed, but eventually the leader, Las Casas, murdered De Oli through treachery, and brought his people

over to acknowledge Cortez. Ignorant of this turn of affairs, and suspecting that his fleet had come to grief, Cortez, as time passed on and no news arrived of the colony, determined to set out himself upon a march to Honduras. It was characteristic of the man, not to be satisfied so long



A CHURCH IN MEXICO.

as a portion of his territory — even though a small and distant one — remained unsubjected to his will.

While he was preparing for this long journey — for it was to be by land, and through untraversed forests — there arrived in Mexico some officers of the king, sent out to inquire into his conduct of affairs, and to assume charge of the government if such a measure should be necessary. In

their hands, though very unwillingly, Cortez left the charge of affairs, and set out on his long and dangerous march. Though the city and valley were well garrisoned, he took with him Guatemotzin, the late emperor, and the Prince of Tacuba, as hostages, to prevent a rebellion of the natives. Having in view the settlement of the new country to be traversed, he took along a large drove of swine, which followed his army, feeding by the way. Many officers of his household, a service of gold and silver plate, musicians, priests, jugglers, and many other superfluous persons and articles, he took with him, which before the march was ended he wished himself rid of. His force consisted of three hundred infantry and cavalry, three thousand Indians, and several pieces of artillery. They arrived at the province of Goatzcoalcos, and here pressed into their service the old comrades of Cortez, who, now living quietly on their farms, had thought their days of fighting over. This was the province of which the talented Indian woman, Marina, who had served the Spaniards so long as interpreter, was a native. There Cortez got rid of his mistress — this woman who had contributed more towards the conquest than any thousand of his soldiers, — by marrying her to one of his soldiers, and assigning her lands in the province of her birth. Beyond this province they soon became entangled in the vast labyrinth of rivers and marshes of the present state of Tabasco, and daily lost numbers of their men by hunger and fatigue.

[A. D. 1525.] It was while his army was in this condition, wandering through the forests of a vague and unknown country, threatened with death by starvation, that Cortez performed that revolting act — the crowning one of a long series of cruelties — the hanging of Guatemotzin. Knowing that this magnanimous chieftain had it now in his power to destroy him and his weakened forces, and to return

to Mexico and head an insurrection, Cortez hung him and the Prince of Tacuba to a tree.

As he was being led to the place of his death, surrounded by the minions of Cortez, the priests, he turned upon him and sorrowfully said: "Malintzin, now I find in what your false words and promises have ended — in my death! Better had I fallen by my own hands than trust myself in your power in my city of Mexico. Why do you thus unjustly take my life? May God demand of you this innocent blood!" To this appeal all lovers of justice and haters of iniquity will say, amen!

In this manner, disgracefully hung upon a *ceiba* tree in the depths of the Tabascan forest, perished Guatemotzin, heroic defender of Mexico, noble and dauntless American, last of the Aztec monarchs. That seared and scorched remnant of a conscience that this monster, Cortez, still possessed, was much disturbed for a few days after this event, and while wandering about restlessly at night he fell from a native temple and injured himself severely. Troubles and dangers thickened upon him at every step; the forests became well nigh impenetrable; they were obliged to build long bridges to cross broad marshes and deep rivers; their provisions were long since exhausted, and for his share of the scant supplies obtained from the natives Cortez was obliged to quarrel with his soldiers. Their only guide through this wilderness was a map painted by the Indians of Goatzcoalcos, used by their merchants in their journeys through that country. The natives furnished them as guides being ignorant of the trail, this was their dependence, together with a compass Cortez had with him and to which the superstitious Indians ascribed supernatural powers. In the end, after enduring privations more terrible than had before befallen them on any expedition in Mexico, a remnant of the force arrived at the settlement in Honduras.

With the same vigor as of old, Cortez applied himself to gaining that territory, and even planned a journey to Nicaragua.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, things were in a very disturbed state, the men left in power quarrelling among themselves and maltreating both the natives and their conquerors. It was given out that Cortez and his army had perished, and their property was divided amongst others, and large sums paid to the priests for masses for the repose of their souls. Letters finally reached Cortez of the condition of affairs, and he was so distressed that he nearly lost his reason. Fate seemed now to have turned against him, as he tried several times to embark and was driven back by contrary winds and currents. At last he succeeded in coasting the shores of Yucatan and landing at Mexico, where he was received with rejoicings by the people. The natives swept the road before him, strewing flowers on his way, and he entered the capital, from which he had been twenty months absent, in triumph.

A long while after, the wretched veterans of his army returned by way of Guatemala, having been, some of them, over two years absent from their homes. The sound of rejoicings had scarcely died away when news came that a royal officer, Luis Ponce de Leon, had arrived from Spain, to take the government from his hands and institute investigations as to his conduct. This gentlemen survived but a little while his entry into Mexico, and the one he had appointed his successor also dying soon, it was rumored that Cortez had poisoned them. It was then brought to mind that the wife of Cortez, whom he exceedingly disliked, had also died soon after joining her husband, after the conquest, and that the unfortunate Garay had expired while a guest in his house. There was great reason for these reports to contain truth, as all were persons whose

removal Cortez desired, and whose deaths were attended by suspicious circumstances.

[A. D. 1527.] In order to vindicate his actions in the past, and to clear his character from these and other aspersions, Cortez resolved to set sail for Spain and present himself before the king. Although much of his property had been lost to him during his departure on the Honduras expedition, and though he could not obtain from the priests the large sum that had been paid them to say masses, and which had been transferred to another he yet had possessions to a vast amount.

At the same time that judges were appointed to proceed to Mexico and inquire into the charges against Cortez, the first Bishop of Mexico, John de Zumárraga, a Franciscan, was nominated with a commission to be "protector of the Indians." With him went forty Dominican friars, and forty Franciscans followed later, with money from the king for the building of a monastery.

Cortez fitted up a ship and sailed for Spain, in a manner befitting the conqueror of New Spain, taking with him a son of Montezuma, one of the chiefs of Tlascala, and several other Indians, as interesting specimens of the people to exhibit to the emperor. Four of these were those jugglers so expert in swinging and in balancing heavy timbers on their feet. He landed at Palos in December, 1527, at which place, shortly after, died his friend, the gallant and noble Sandoval, most trusty captain of the veterans of Mexico.

The presence of Cortez at court allayed all the suspicions of the king, who loaded him with honors. He created him Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca, assigning lands and estates of great extent to enable him to maintain his elevated rank, and confirmed him in his title of Captain-General of New Spain and the South Sea. He declined, however, to return

him to Mexico as Governor of New Spain, fearing to place in absolute power one so popular among the people. The most Cortez could obtain was permission to fit out two ships on voyages of discovery, with the royal consent to one-twelfth the land he should find and the right to rule over the new colonies.

His wealth and elevated position assisted him to form an alliance with a niece of the Duke of Bejar, his firm friend in times of adversity. The jewels he gave his young and beautiful bride were the richest ever seen in Spain; they were the spoils of Indian princes whom the gallant Cortez had murdered to obtain. But these gems shone resplendent on the person of the fair Donna Juana de Zuniga, and so excited the envy of the queen, Isabella, that from being a friend of Cortez she became his enemy.

He had now entirely forgotten his old comrades, but he sent a rich present to his holiness the Pope, and some of the Indians to dance before him. His holiness was pleased to grant bulls of indulgence to him and his soldiers from the penalties of their sins; and henceforth were their consciences easy; no longer need they fear the ghosts of the millions of murdered Indians they had sent to the land of shades. They were now recognized as apostles of the most holy faith, who had done blessed work in converting the pagan Mexicans from their worship of idols to that of the true God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE REIGN OF THE VICEROYS.
(1535–1820.)

THE first *Audiencia* was created in 1528, with the cruel and sanguinary Nuño de Guzman as president, who, among other oppressive acts, tortured by fire the once-powerful King of Michoacan. It governed the country badly, making its tyranny felt in every part; putting to death or expelling from the country all who opposed it. The condition of the Indians was terrible; the system of oppression put in force at this time has left its traces visible even to the present day.

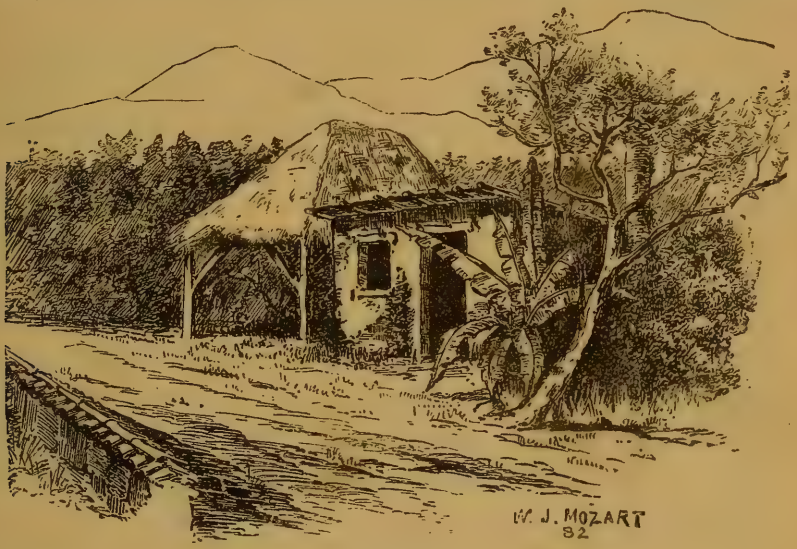
In 1524 Padre Valencia founded convents in Tezcoco, Tlascala, Huexotzinco and Mexico, and the Padre Gante the parochial church of Santa Maria. In 1529 the same Padre Gante established the College of San Juan de Letran.

In 1530, in April, was commenced the city of Puebla, eighty thousand Tlascallans laboring so industriously that it soon contained above 3,000 houses. To-day it is a city of 70,000 inhabitants.

[A. D. 1532.] Cortez, on his return from Spain in 1530, had established himself with his lovely wife in the vale of Cuernavaca, where he built a palatial residence and devoted himself to the cultivation of sugar-cane. To him is due the first impulse towards the development of this industry, which has now assumed such vast proportions.

He soon tired of this employment, however, and in 1532 availed himself of the powers vested in him by the king for

discovery and conquest, and fitted out two ships to explore the Pacific. This expedition proving a failure, he fitted out two more vessels, which accomplished nothing more than the discovery of Lower California. Still undaunted, he launched three more ships, at Tehuantepec, in 1537, and attempted a colony in Lower California; but nearly all the colonists perished, and he at last gave up his attempts at fresh discoveries after having expended over 300,000



AZTEC HUT.

crowns. In 1540, a disappointed and sorrowful man, he returned to Spain to seek restitution for his losses; but, after years of vain endeavor, he at last died, in the state of misery he merited, in the year 1547.

We will not stop to inquire if his conscience was ever oppressed by feelings of remorse for the unparalleled calamities he had entailed upon the innocent Mexicans, but will turn from him with the same sense of relief we would feel at the death of a venomous serpent that had drawn its loathsome trail over this fair earth.

In 1530 the misgovernment in Mexico called for a change; a new Audiencia was appointed, followed by the establishment of a viceroyalty. The *viceroy*, the person who was to be invested with all the authority of the king himself, and who was to govern the new vice-kingdom, was to be one whose high position placed him beyond suspicion, and whose fidelity to the crown was unquestionable. Such a man was found in Don Antonio de Mendoza, one of the royal chamberlains.

He arrived in Mexico in 1535, where he was received as one who represented in his person the king, who was to carry out the policy of Charles, believed to be favorably disposed towards his Indian subjects. For several years his reign was uneventful, except that the vice-kingdom steadily progressed, the mines continued to be worked, and the Indians still labored for the benefit of Spanish task-masters.

[A. D. 1536.] Most celebrated in the annals of the viceroyalty should be this year, 1536, for in it was published the *first book* printed in Mexico, the first ever printed in the New World! It was issued from the press of Juan Pablos, and entitled *La Escala de San Juan Climaca.*

In the same year the first money was coined in Mexico, for the viceroy had orders from the king when he left Spain to establish a mint. Two hundred thousand dollars in copper were coined, but it proved so offensive to the Indians that they could only with difficulty be made to receive it, and in 1541 cast the entire coinage into the lake. These descendants of the nobility of Mexico had been accustomed to handling of gold and silver, and scorned to soil their hands by contact with baser metal.

In 1537 Guzman, the assassin of the King of Michoacan, was cast into prison; in 1540 Cortez sailed for Spain accompanied by his son; and in 1541 died Pedro de Alva-

rado, formerly captain in Cortez's army, and later Governor of Guatemala.

[A. D. 1542.] The Indians of Jalisco rising in rebellion the viceroy marched upon and subdued them, treating them with great humanity. In this movement he was accompanied by an army of fifty thousand friendly Indians, and four hundred and fifty Spanish soldiers.

DISCOVERY OF THE PUEBLOS.

At this time came reports from a country far to the north, brought by a wandering monk, of a native kingdom called *Quivara*, containing the seven cities of Cibola.

If we could but follow the threads of history we should see how closely interwoven with the conquest of Mexico are the leading events in the discovery of other American possessions. Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had fought Cortez on Mexican soil in 1520, some years later, in 1528, landed a large force in Florida. Owing to the failure of his fleet to meet him at a certain point his army was reduced to starvation. Embarking in frail boats nearly all the survivors were drowned. A few were cast ashore on what is now known as Texas, and three of them finally succeeded in reaching their brother Spaniards in Mexico after ten years' wanderings. They brought them this news of the existence, far to the northward of Spanish dominion, of seven wonderful cities, inhabited by people far superior to the average Indian. With imaginations all aflame from these stories, the Spaniards were eager to at once undertake the capture of those wonderful cities in the far north.

In the year 1540 the viceroy sent an army of three hundred soldiers, under command of Vasquez de Coronado, for the subjugation of the seven cities, with everything necessary for colonization as well as conquest. They

found "The Seven Cities of Cibola," as report had named them; but found no silver, as in Mexico; no gold, as in Peru.

Sadly disappointed, Captain Coronado abandoned the country at the end of two years, and returned southward to his home.

The people living here offered but little resistance and were consequently humanely treated. They were found to be a peace-loving and agricultural race, living in great houses of *adobe*, hundreds of families in a single residence. Their descendants occupy the same dwellings to-day and retain the names given them at that time by the Spaniards. They were called *Pueblos* — from the Spanish *pueblo*, or village — and the Pueblos to-day constitute the most civilized and intelligent of our Indians. They have many traditions that connect them with the Aztecs or the Toltecs, but they have no system of written characters or hieroglyphs. Their legends have been passed down by word of mouth alone, and are hence valueless as affording even material for history. Great pains have been taken to obtain their secret traditions as preserved by the old men of the nation of the *Zunis*, and extravagant efforts have been used to draw public attention to them of late; but without any beneficial result to the student of history.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century another Spanish captain reconquered that region, and the people were eventually enslaved and compelled to labor in the mines. Nearly a hundred years later, in 1680, they rebelled and after much brave fighting drove the Spaniards from the country. Thirteen years afterward they were again enslaved, and remained victims of Spanish oppression for one hundred and thirty years, until Mexico gained her independence, in 1821.

These Indians had a tradition that a new race of men



VIEW IN A NEW MEXICAN PUEBLO.

would come from the East to deliver them from the bondage of the Spaniards and Mexicans, and this was happily verified in 1846, when their territory, *New Mexico*, fell into the hands of United States soldiers.

Returning to the capital of Mexico, we shall find that everything continued to prosper; lands were distributed to poor and meritorious Spaniards, and mines long known to the ancient Mexicans were opened and successfully worked. In the years 1541 and 1542 were founded the cities of Guadalajara and Valladolid.

[A. D. 1545.] In this year occurred an eruption of the volcano of Orizaba; in the following year the rich mines of Zacatecas were discovered, and a terrible pestilence broke out among the Indians, in which eighty thousand of them perished.

In 1548 the first Bishop of Mexico, Zumárraga, died, the same man who caused such a great loss to the world by the destruction of Indian paintings. Desiring to remove from the sight of the Indians every vestige of their former arts, and especially of their idolatry, this infamous bigot ransacked the library vaults of Tezcoco and Mexico, and piling the hieroglyphic paintings in a great heap destroyed the whole by fire. No one can estimate the loss such a destruction of historic paintings has occasioned. Learned men have not ceased to regret it to the present day; and if any man ever deserved the curses of the Mexican nation, it is this same first Bishop of Mexico, Don Juan de Zumárraga.

[A. D. 1550.] Of the large number of viceroys sent out by the Kings of Spain to govern their new kingdom across the sea none was better fitted for the position than the first one, Mendoza. His many estimable qualities won upon people of all classes, and he paved the way for the future government of his successors by uniting the

many apparently incongruous and inharmonious elements of society.

Recognizing his peculiar fitness for the task of organizing the disordered elements of a new colony, the king promoted this able man to the viceroyalty of Peru, the subjugation of which country had been accomplished by Pizarro. He left Mexico in the year 1550, and his successor arrived the same year.

Before following any farther the chronology of events in the capital it would be well for us to turn back a leaf or two in our history, and recall a province which we have well-nigh forgotten, and which, during these years just recorded, had come into prominence again — the province of Yucatan.

CHAPTER XXV.

DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF YUCATAN.

In Chap. I., pp. 23 and 24, we made allusion to a great empire which once existed in Central America, and the fact of whose existence gave support to the theory that our American Indians were *autochthonic* — native to the soil. In an epoch which it is impossible to fix, but which undoubtedly was long before the beginning of the Christian era, there flourished here a powerful theocratic empire, called by its enemies *Xibalba*, of which it is thought *Palenque* was the capital, now in ruins, the most magnificent of any on this continent.

This was destroyed (it is thought) by Nahuatl tribes from beyond the River Panuco. The dispersed inhabitants sought refuge in Yucatan, Guatemala, Darien, and even spread to Peru. The conquerors founded a city near Ocosingo (state of Chiapas), which they called *Tulhá*, or Tula. Following a sacred historical book of the Quiches, called the *Ah Tza*, it is conjectured that the most ancient inhabitants of Yucatan, the *Itzaes* — *Ah Tzaes* — are the direct descendants of the inhabitants of Xibalba.*

Strange as it may seem, that the natives of Yucatan at the period of its conquest all spoke one tongue — the Maya — Yucatan shows traces of having been inhabited by three distinct peoples. These were the *Itzaes*, the *Mayas*, and the *Caribs*. The first invaders of which there is any tradition are the Itzaes, who established themselves in the

* Following the celebrated scholar, Ancona, *Historia de Yucatan*, Merida, 1878.

eastern and northern portions of the peninsula, and founded the cities of *Chichen*, *Itzamal*, and *T'Ho* (Merida).

[A. D. 580 (?).] The Mayas followed soon after, and in the sixth century came the *Tutul Xius*, who settled in the country to the south-west, about *Uxmal*, and gradually spread north and east.

At the conquest, the Mayas allied themselves with the conquerors, but the Itzaes, preferring ostracism to servitude, retired to Peten, buried deep in the great forests on the confines of Guatemala. Towards the end of the tenth century the Tutul Xius had acquired great strength, and commenced to persecute the Itzaes to the last extremity, causing this afflicted people to return to the first city they had established in Yucatan — *Chacnovitan* — in which they had laid the foundation of their religion.

[A. D. 1180, or 1200.] The growing power of the Tutul Xius so alarmed the Prince of the Mayas, residing in Mayapan, that he treated with the military chiefs of Tabasco and Xicalango for troops. About this time, consequently, there entered into Yucatan a strong body of Mexican, or Toltec, soldiers, which were used as a garrison for Mayapan. Dissensions and jealousy followed this introduction of foreign troops. A century later the chief of the Tutul Xius marched upon Mayapan, and after a bloody conflict with its defenders destroyed it.

[A. D. 1450.] It was in this epoch that the Itzaes abandoned their city of Chichen and secluded themselves in the great wilderness. Their traditions relate that their prophets predicted the coming of the Spaniards, and, tired of war and bloodshed, they retired to a point where they could be at peace. The country was then divided into numerous independent states. According to some writers the people were afflicted with famine, floods, and pestilence; but it is doubtful if any event of importance occurred between the

middle of the fifteenth century and the landing of Cordova in Yucatan territory, in 1517.

THE RUINS OF YUCATAN.

In a geographical sense, Yucatan does not belong to Mexico, but as it is a political province of the republic it must be included in a history of that country. In its physical features it is radically different from Mexico proper, being a vast plain of coral rock with but few elevations. Its ruins indicate that it was once inhabited by highly civilized aborigines. There is nothing like them in other parts of America, and only a few others that approach them in magnitude, in grandeur, in beauty of original design, construction, and embellishment.

We have not space to describe in detail these magnificent structures, only to mention a few, conspicuous from their great beauty and from the vastness of their remains.

Lying on the borders of Yucatan are the ruins of Palenque, supposed to have been the capital city of that great aboriginal empire of Xibalba. It was only discovered by the Spaniards in 1750, although Cortez and his army passed near it in the unfortunate march to Honduras. The principal structure here, called the "Palace," is twenty-five feet high, two hundred and twenty-eight feet long, and one hundred and eighty deep. Its walls are stone, laid with mortar and sand, covered with stucco nearly as hard as the stone itself and painted. Ranges of stone steps thirty feet broad lead up to it, flanked by gigantic statues, nine feet high, carved in stone, with rich necklaces and head-dresses. The characteristic feature of these ruins is the *stucco* ornamentation, the façades of the buildings being covered with it, and the corner-pieces with hieroglyphics.

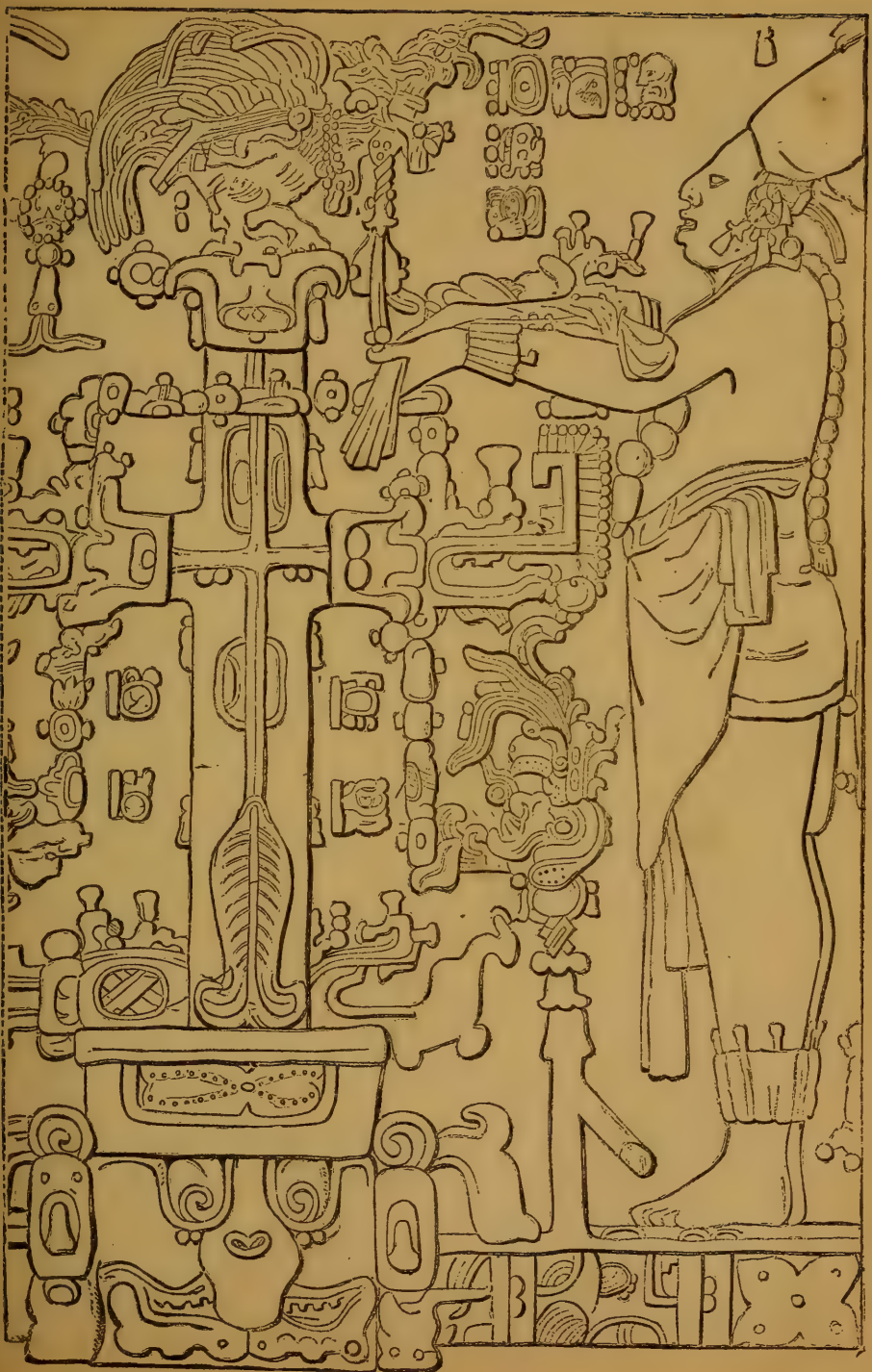
We cannot pass these ruins by without especially mentioning one piece of sculptured stone that has excited

a general interest the world over. This is the famous "Tablet of the Cross," so faithfully reproduced in the accompanying engraving. Many have argued from this that the Indians of America were acquainted with this symbol, and hence once had listened to the preaching of Christianity by one of the apostles. All agree that it indicates great antiquity for these ruins.

No one has yet been able to decipher the hieroglyphics that surround this symbol, nor has any one yet interpreted satisfactorily the meaning of the central picture. Figures of the cross have been found in other places in Central America, Europe, and Asia with such surroundings as give a greater antiquity than is usually ascribed to it.

Copan, in Honduras, though situated beyond the province we are examining, is worthy of description. Carved idols and sculptured altars are there profusely scattered throughout the forests.

To return to Yucatan. We find the largest "city" in Chichen, about thirty miles west of the present city of Valladolid, occupying an area about two miles in circumference. A conspicuous ruin there is called the "House of the Nuns," very rich in sculpture. The grandest building is called the "Castle," though the names these structures bear now are those bestowed by a later generation than the people who built them. The ornaments carved in the white limestone and the hieroglyphs are rich and wonderful; all attempts to decipher the latter have proved fruitless. Among the mural paintings that adorn these walls are many that are beautiful, even from an artistic standpoint. Some represent warriors in battle, casting javelins and spears, while others portray events in the lives of the successive rulers of Chichen. Around the cornice of one building is a procession of tigers, or lynxes. In another building, to which one explorer gave the name



PALENQUE CROSS.



of "the gymnasium," are great stone rings set in the wall. Similar ones have been found in Mexico, and it is supposed that they were used in games of ball. They are four feet in diameter, and thirteen inches thick, with a sculptured border of entwined serpents.

Among these ruins, which are the remains of the once rich and flourishing capital of the Itzaes — Chichen-Itza, the Itza city — men have labored for years striving to discover the secrets they contain. The celebrated explorer, Dr. Le Plongeon, here discovered a beautiful monolith, the largest statue ever unearthed in this country. It was called by him *Chaac-mol*, and now reposes in the museum at the capital of Mexico, an object of curiosity and speculation to the student of American archæology. The same intrepid explorer and his devoted wife have made tracings of the mural paintings and photographs of all the hieroglyphs, occupations which have cost them years of labor.

The ruins of Uxmal (pronounced *Oosh-mál*), situated about fifty miles south of the present capital of Yucatan, Merida, are not less famous and interesting than those of Chichen-Itza. There are many magnificent piles scattered over a large area. The most conspicuous building is that called the "House of the Governor," standing on the uppermost of three ranges of terraces, the first of which is five hundred and seventy-five feet long. The front wall is towards the east, and is three hundred and twenty-two feet in length; the façade is smooth and without ornament to the tops of the doorways, but the cornice above is one mass of rich and elaborately sculptured ornaments. It forms a perfect sculptured mosaic, with the added interest that each stone contains a history; for these sculptures are hieroglyphs, and preserve an allegory or part of a historical record. Eleven doorways open into a double series of rooms, the principal ones being sixty feet long,

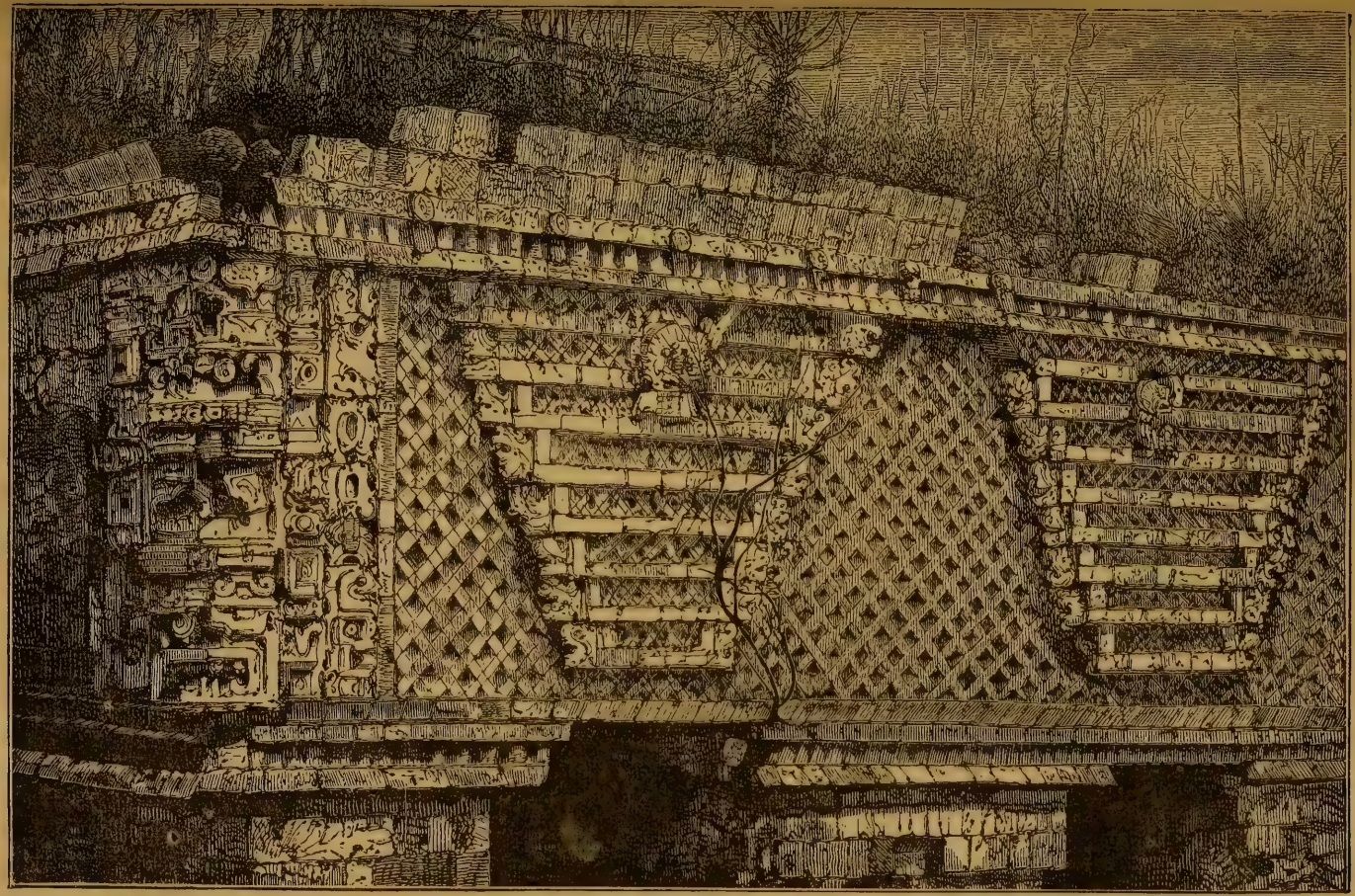
and with arched ceilings twenty-three feet high. This, in brief, is a hasty description of the great "Governor's House" — *Casa del Gobernador* — of Uxmal. The engravings will convey more faithful pictures than pages of text, and to them the reader is referred.

But this is only one of the ruined structures that abound in Uxmal. On one of the terraces supporting this ruin is a smaller one, known as the "House of the Turtles" — *Casa de las Tortugas* — from a beaded cornice containing a row of stone tortoises of large size.

Chief of the structures is the "Palace of the Nuns," an immense quadrangular building, its high and elaborately chiselled walls surrounding a great court two hundred and fourteen feet wide by two hundred and fifty-eight feet long. The interior façades are mazes of wonderful sculpture, and on one wall is a representation of the deity, *Quetzalcoatl*, the symbolical "feathered serpent," stretching its plumed body across the entire length of the court.

Other buildings lie in ruins, and heaps of stone alone tell where many others formerly stood. The "House of the Pigeons" is one, the "House of the Old Woman," and the "Nameless Mound," all lie within sight of the central structures. There is one pyramid here, crowned by a long narrow building called the "House of the Dwarf," which is reached by one hundred steps, each one foot high. The entire mound is eighty-five feet high, two hundred and thirty-five feet long by one hundred and fifty-five wide, and the crowning structure is seventy-two feet by twelve.

All around Uxmal are ruins, the surface being literally covered with them, showing that this region was at one time densely inhabited. This section was that in which dwelt the Tutul Xius, last immigrants to Yucatan before the Spanish invasion. South and southeast of this are many more vestiges of cities, once inhabited, but now



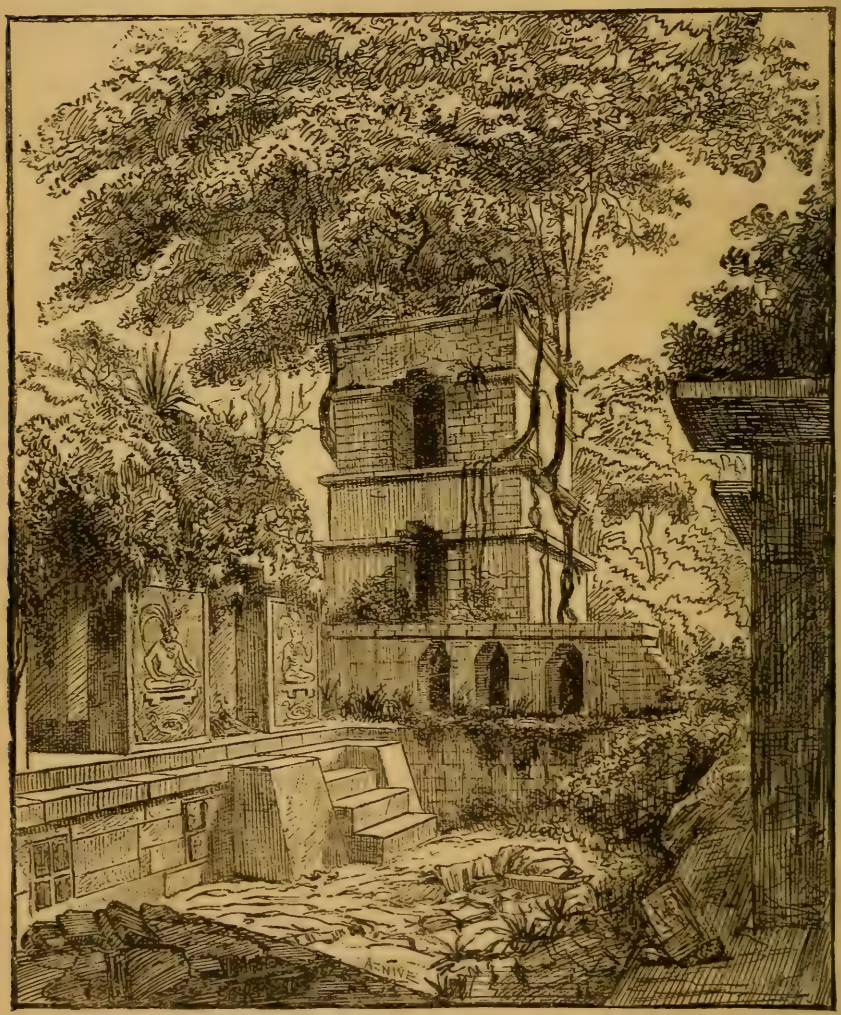
FACADE OF THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE, UXMAL.

silent and desolate. Such are *Labna*, *Kahbah*, *Nohpat*, and many others. Some are celebrated for the simplicity of their architecture and grandeur of proportions, while others excite the wonder of the few travellers who have seen them by the profuseness and beauty of their ornaments. Not the least interesting of these is that ancient capital of the Maya empire, *Mayapan*. Of all the groups of ruins it is the nearest to the present capital, Merida. The mound at Mayapan is sixty feet high and one hundred square at its base. Upon its summit is a stone platform fifteen feet square, and sculptured stones are scattered all about.

To go into the details of these remarkable structures, scattered so profusely throughout the wilds of Yucatan, would, with our present space, be impossible. The curious and studious reader should consult such works as Stephen's valuable volumes: "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan." This indefatigable traveller and pleasant writer discovered, a little over forty years ago, *forty ruined cities*. His pages are replete with valuable descriptions and interesting sketches of travel in that most fascinating land of ruined cities. Since Stephen's time many valuable additions have been made to the list, and much has been brought to light that was not then even dreamed of. The learned Brasseur de Bourbourg spent many years studying the hieroglyphs and Maya manuscripts. Monsieur Charnay procured many photographs, and the United States Consul, Mr. Louis H. Aymé, is at present (1882) industriously engaged in a thorough examination of monuments of aboriginal skill wholly unknown to our early archæologists.

The attention of the country is being directed towards that long-neglected peninsula, and its future seems to contain almost as many possibilities as its past. We may, perhaps, count upon more, for it yet remains for us to dis-

cover the key to those hieroglyphs that adorn the silent walls of those dead cities, and which may contain, locked up within their mystic characters, the secret of the race



TOWER, PALENQUE.

that carved them. He who shall discover this will be certain to have his name engraven high upon the walls of the temple of fame.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DETAILS OF THE CONQUEST.

[A. D. 1526.] Among the adventurers who sailed with both Grijalva and Cortez was a gallant young man named Montejo — Don Francisco Montejo, a cavalier of Seville. Twice, by his last commander, Cortez, he was entrusted with a commission to Spain to the king. He was one of those who sailed in that first vessel that ever made the voyage from New to Old Spain, when that royal present was carried from Montezuma to Charles V. On his second arrival as commissioner he was rewarded for his distinguished services by a coat-of-arms, and many grants and privileges.

In the year 1526, in December, he obtained a royal grant for the pacification and conquest of Cozumel and Yucatan. In the fevered haste with which the different expeditions to New Spain had swept on towards the ill-fated capital of Montezuma's empire, Yucatan had been entirely overlooked. We know that it was the first province discovered of New Spain; that its coast was made known in 1502 to Columbus; in 1506 it was seen by Pinzon; that Cordova landed there in 1517, followed by Grijalva in 1518, and by Cortez in 1519. But, as it was *gold* the Spaniards were after, and as every indication of the precious metal pointed to the table-lands of Mexico, Yucatan remained neglected. There was no gold there, and, moreover, the inhabitants of its coasts had always given the visiting Spaniards such warm receptions that they were

always glad to leave them alone after a single trial of their prowess. Anxious as they were for the bringing of these Indians under the influence of their religion, the acquisition of wealth was a matter of vastly greater concern. So the tide of conquest flowed over all Mexico, and extended even to Guatemala and the Pacific, before it more than lapped the shores of Yucatan.

[A. D. 1527.] But its time was soon to come. In the year 1527 Montejo's fleet of four vessels, containing four hundred men, with liberal supplies, landed at Cozumel, the same island that Cortez had rendezvoused at eight years before. Here, for the first time, the Spaniards had seen, as they coasted, "villages in which they could distinguish houses of stone that appeared white and lofty at a distance. There were so many and such stately stone buildings that they were amazing; and the greatest wonder is that having no use of any metal these people were able to raise such structures, which seem to have been temples." The Spaniards took possession of the country in the name of their king, the bearer of the royal standard planting it in the ground, crying in a loud voice, "*España! España! Viva España!*"

Their troubles commenced almost at their landing, for the people of this section of the country were as hostile to strangers, and as courageous, as any the Spaniards had met on the western coast. Men fell sick from the heat, the country was rough and rocky, and overgrown with dense woods; though the little army offered no violence to any one, evidences accumulated on every side that the natives of Yucatan were gathering for a general resistance to the invasion.

After enduring great fatigue the army arrived at the town of *Aké*. On the present map of Yucatan, Aké exists no longer as a centre of population, but at this place are some



HOUSE OF THE NUNS, CHICHEN.

of the most wonderful ruins in the peninsula. Here are great ranges of pillars, consisting of large stones piled one upon the other. They are known to the Indians as *Katunes*, or calendar stones, perpetuating epochs of their history. By them their wise men kept the record of the passing years, and by means of them we can trace the existence of this people back in the past many thousands of years.

In sight, perhaps, of these mute memorials of ages past, the Spaniards and Indians fought a terrible battle. The savages had lain in ambush, and pounced upon them without warning, with shouts and yells, and such a sounding of sea-shells, trumpets, and turtle-shells that the hills seemed to shake. The astonished Spaniards fought bravely; they seem to have been superior men, in point of morals, to other armies that had invaded New Spain, and more deserving of sympathy than any that had preceded them.

Great slaughter ensued, but at nightfall, when the fighting ceased, the Indians yet remained on the ground. At daybreak next morning the battle was renewed and continued fiercely till midday, when the Indians gave way. The Spaniards were so weary with watching and fighting that they could not pursue the slowly retreating enemy, and sank exhausted on the field. Many were killed and wounded, and twelve hundred of the Indians had lost their lives.

In 1528 another great battle was fought near Chichen Itza, the very ancient capital of the unfortunate Itzaes. This is said to have been one of the bloodiest engagements that ever took place in these Indian wars. A great many Indians were killed, but one hundred and fifty Spaniards also lost their lives and nearly every survivor was wounded.

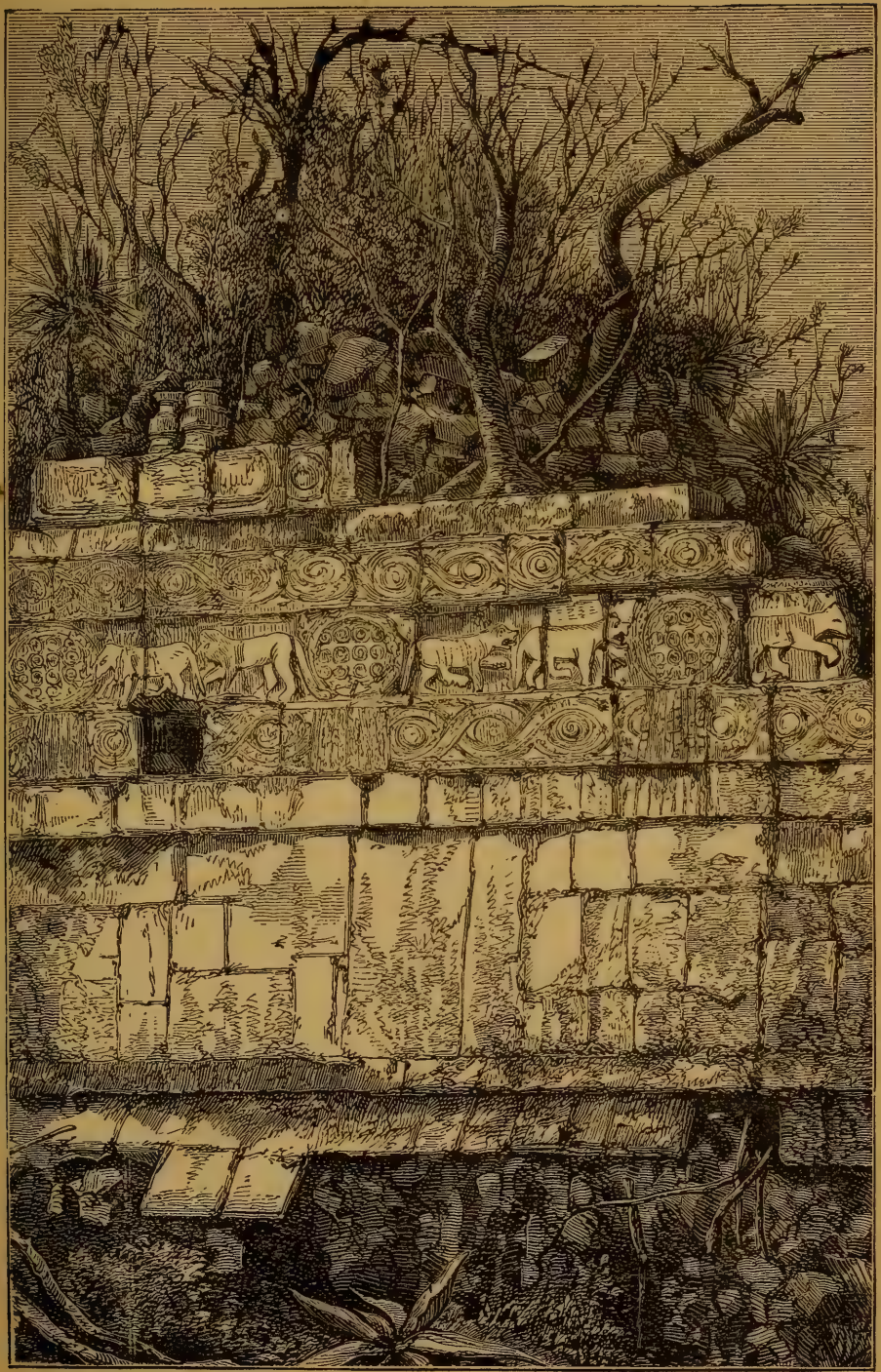
[A. D. 1528.] The only province in which they could learn that gold existed was that of Bakalar, to which

Montejo dispatched one of his captains, Davila, with a demand for tribute. The fierce cacique sent back the haughty message that he would send them fowls on spears and Indian corn on arrow-points. They were only too glad to get back to the main body, this detachment under Captain Davila, which they only accomplished at the end of two years. By this time the remains of the army had reached Campeche, on the western coast, and here they remained for several years making ineffectual attempts to penetrate the country. The Indians of Tabasco, who had been conquered by Cortez, now revolted, and as this province belonged to the Adelantado, Montejo, he felt constrained to go over to compel them into obedience. While he was gone the garrison at Campeche became so reduced that but five soldiers remained fit for duty.

[A. D. 1535.] It was therefore resolved to abandon the post, and in the year 1535, after some years of fruitless fighting the last Spaniard departed from the shores of Yucatan. The last person to leave was Gonzales Nieto, the one who had first planted the royal banner on the eastern coast, eight years previous.

By this time the Adelantado, Don Francisco Montejo, was impoverished. The fame of Pizarro's conquests in Peru drew away his best soldiers, and no one could be found to aid him in the subjugation of a people so fierce as the Yucatecans, the capture of whom would yield no booty other than cotton garments and rude implements of warfare.

[A. D. 1537.] Don Francisco, having completed the pacification of the Tabascans, again turned his attention to Yucatan. In 1537 he landed a small force at Campeche, or Champotan, and, leaving them in command of his son, returned to Tabasco for supplies and reinforcements. The Spaniards were attacked almost as soon as they had landed,



BAS-RELIEF OF TIGERS, CHICHEN.

and some captured soldiers were carried into the interior and sacrificed to the Indian idols.

Disunited as they were, the various Indian caciques resolved to unite once more and attempt the expulsion of the hated invaders. It was at Champotan, immense numbers gathered together and fell upon the Spaniards. The latter were driven to their boats; but, stung to shame by the taunts and insults of their foes, they returned to land, wounded and bleeding, and finally drove the Indians from their camp. The latter might yet have crushed them out had they but made concerted action against them, but unfortunately they retired and dispersed to their various villages.

[A. D. 1540.] The Adelantado, having placed his son (also named Francisco) in possession of all the rights and privileges granted him by the king, retired to the government of Chiapas, and the younger man carried out the plans for pacification.

In 1540 the city of Campeche was founded; it exists to-day, a port of some importance. It was resolved to strike direct for the Indian capital, and when, after great exertions, a small force had been finally collected, the march was commenced. This Indian capital was known as *Tihoo*, situated in the interior. The Indians did much to obstruct their march; concealed the wells and ponds and withheld and destroyed provisions. In addition to the perils of fighting they had hunger and thirst to contend with. Their sufferings were almost unendurable; but they finally arrived in the vicinity of the great town of Tihoo. A terrible storm was gathering, soon to break upon them.

[A. D. 1541.] In the month of June, 1541, the storm burst. More than forty thousand Indians — according to the old chroniclers — precipitated themselves upon the Spanish camp. The battle that followed was the most san-

guinary and most desperately fought of any that had taken place. It lasted the greater part of the day, the Indians returning to the attack again and again ; but at evening the Spaniards remained masters of the field, though so obstructed by the heaps of bodies of the slain that they could not pursue the retreating foe.

This great battle ended all combined resistance to Spanish arms. Cacique after cacique came in and submitted, until a great part of the territory came under Spanish rule.

[A. D. 1542.] On the sixth of January, 1542, Don Francisco Montejo, son of the Adelantado and conqueror of Yucatan, founded on the site of this Indian town of Tihoo the city of Merida. To-day you may view this beautiful city, with its noble buildings, its quaint architecture. After sixteen weary years of desultory fighting, after repeated rebuffs, after enduring losses that might well have discouraged a less noble spirit, Don Francisco Montejo found himself in possession of this coveted country.

Forty years had passed since Columbus heard of this country, and eleven since Cortez had humbled the proud capital of the Aztecs. Two new empires, Mexico and Peru, had been added to the Spanish crown during these years of fighting, both as rich in the gold the Spaniards so coveted as this was poor in the elements of wealth. It was a barren conquest, this of Don Francisco Montejo, not at all worthy the great expenditure in men and treasure it had cost him.

Dating from the period of its conquest, Yucatan existed as a Captain-Generalcy, a distinct government from that of Mexico or Guatemala. When we come to speak of Mexico as a whole and united republic we shall take another glance at Yucatan ; for the present, we will leave it to follow the action of more stirring events in the territory wrested from the Aztecs.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE REIGN OF THE VICEROYS. — *Continued.*

[A. D. 1551.] Don Louis de Velasco, the second viceroy, was a worthy successor of Mendoza, and one possessed, apparently, of more firmness than he, for he had the courage to carry out the laws for the liberation of the Indians. He released from slavery more than one hundred and fifty thousand Indians, who toiled for the benefit of their oppressors in the mines, in the fields, and in the mountains. By his humane conduct Velasco brought upon him the enmity of the planters and mine-owners, who were becoming rich from the labor of their Indian slaves, and who procured from the king a partial revocation of the laws in favor of the friendless race.

In 1553 was founded the royal university at the city of Mexico by an order of the emperor, Charles V., dated September, 1551. In the same year occurred a great inundation, the first since the occupation of Mexico by the Spaniards, and a great dike was constructed, in imitation of that ancient work of the Aztec kings.

In 1555 the Chichimecs, or wild Indians of the north, rebelled and committed great depredations, and Don Francisco Ibarra was dispatched to conquer and explore the territory to the north and west; this he did successfully, discovered many rich mines of gold and silver, and the city of Durango was founded in 1563.

In the year 1557 the news reached Mexico of the abdication of Charles V., and the accession to the throne of

Spain of that monster of iniquity, Philip, his son. This had taken place with imposing ceremonies in Brussels in the month of October, 1555. The transfer of power was soon observed in the spies, that the suspicious Philip soon sent out to watch the movements of the viceroy and to oppress the Indians, whom, we have reason to believe, his royal father honestly wished to relieve. A new *Audiencia* was established, without consulting which the viceroy could perform no important business; and a *visitador*, or royal spy, was sent out, who perpetrated such cruelties against the Indians that he has ever since been mentioned as "*El Molestador de los Indios*" — the molester of the Indians.

[A. D. 1564.] The good viceroy, who had striven to perform his duty by all his subjects, died in 1564, while engaged in fitting out an expedition for the Philippine Islands, which sailed the same year, and founded the celebrated eastern city of Manilla. Another viceroy took the reins of government two years later, and during the interval the Audiencia was the ruling power.

This viceroy was distinguished for nothing that has made his name memorable, and it will be an idle task for the reader to burden his memory with even his name. This is also true of the majority of that long list of viceroys, over sixty in number, that ruled New Spain for a period of three hundred years. With a few rare exceptions they were merely creatures of the king, sent out to do his bidding, and removed as soon as they ventured to perform an independent act. Few of them were remarkable enough to live in the pages of history, and, with the reader's permission, we will not burden the narrative with half a hundred superfluous names.* Now and then we shall find some name shining forth, either elevated into prominence

* For a complete list of kings and viceroys see Appendix.

through some act of its owner, or the circumstances of the times in which he lived and ruled. These shall not be neglected.

In the year 1562 the "Marquis of the Valley," son and heir of Cortez, returned to Mexico, taking up his residence in the city. His palace was the resort of the Mexican aristocracy — or of those who wished to be considered as such — who had inherited fortunes or titles from their fathers, the original adventurers. The prestige of his name was such, and he so evidently was a favorite with the people, that the Audiencia feared — or pretended to fear — that he might wish to usurp the power bestowed upon them by his majesty, the King of Spain. A plot was reported to have been formed, which had for its object the murder of the Spaniards in power and the elevation of the family of Cortez. It would have been an easy matter for one bearing that potent name to excite a popular uprising among the Indians, who would have fought as bravely in his cause — as against the cause of Spain — as did their fathers against the advances of the conqueror.

[A. D. 1566.] It was to have taken place on the 13th of August, on the anniversary of the fall of the city; Don Martin Cortez, son of the conqueror and the Indian girl, Marina, was to place himself at the head of armed bands and proclaim his half-brother, the Marques, King of Mexico. This was in the year 1566. The Marques was imprisoned, and two friends, who had given utterance to treasonable expressions, were publicly beheaded and their heads stuck upon spears.

The arrival of the new viceroy caused a stay of these proceedings, and the Marquis of the Valley escaped to Spain, where he felt himself more secure than in the country which his father had given to the Spanish crown.

THE INQUISITION IN MEXICO.

[A. D. 1568.] The *Visitador* Muñoz, who had been sent to inquire into charges respecting the late viceroy, seized Don Martin Cortez, and put him to the torture. Although the innocence of this wretched man was fully established a few years later, he suffered much bodily pain and great losses of property during its seven years' sequestration. The satisfaction with which some of the conquered race must have viewed this putting to the torture of a son of Cortez and Marina, the two instruments of their enslavement, must have been extreme.

What a pity that the monster genius of Spanish invasion could not have been brought within the compass of a single body, and suffocated by the clasp of iron-handed justice upon its throat!

[A. D. 1571.] It was in the year 1571 that the infernal monsters engaged in burning heretics in Spain sent into Mexico the terrible Inquisition. The world immediately within control of that loathsome instrument of Satan, Philip II. of Spain, was becoming purged of its dissenters, and, with his diabolic instinct for making misery more miserable, he reached out his bloody hands towards his western possessions. Thirteen years previously Charles V., the father of Philip, had charged him upon his dying bed to show no mercy to heretics. Says a learned writer upon events of Spanish history: "The devout, prayerful (shall we say conscientious) bigot, with dying breath, urged his son Philip to extirpate heresy from his realms by all the energies of the Inquisition, without favor or mercy to any one. 'So,' says he, 'you shall have my blessing, and the Lord shall prosper all your undertakings.' Philip fulfilled these injunctions with cruelty which one would think must have flooded with tears the eyes of angels."

In the year following, in 1559, this incarnate demon publicly celebrated an *auto da fé*, or "act of faith," in which, in the city of Valladolid, many human beings were burned alive, simply because they differed from the Church of Rome



PORTRAIT OF PHILIP OF SPAIN.

upon some trifling matter of religious belief. Centuries before, in 1231, this "Mother of Harlots," had sanctioned the burning of the holders of heretical doctrines, and had delivered the execution of its will to the Dominicans.

This pestiferous sect had already established itself in Mexico, and under the shadow of its church of Santo Domingo the brethren of this iniquitous Inquisition settled themselves, like vampires, on the watch for prey.

Another sect devoted to the interests of the Pope of Rome, though not so stained with blood and imbued with ignorance as the Dominican, gained a foothold in Mexico in the year following, in 1572.

[A. D. 1573.] The corner-stone of the great cathedral of Mexico was laid in this year. In 1525, upon the site of the famous Aztec *teocalli*, a temple had been erected. This was now demolished to make way for a more stately edifice, and the grand cathedral slowly grew to assume the proportions it preserves to the present day. It was nearly a century in progress of construction, as it was not finished until the year 1667; and the total cost of this sumptuous temple, including the works added by succeeding generations, has exceeded two millions of dollars.

A complete description of it would be out of place in a work like this, but we may mention, in passing, that it is one of the most magnificent churches in the New World. Its length is 425 feet, its breadth 200, and the height of its towers 200. These towers contained forty-six bells, which rang out their deafening clamor upon the very spot where stood the altars of the Aztec war-god, upon the summit-platform of the temple-pyramid.

Its interior was adorned with every work of art available to its builders at that period. Its Virgin and the glory of its cupola are the work of celebrated artists. Its high altar was formerly the richest in the world, and even to-day, after having been successively plundered, is most magnificent, ablaze with gold and jewels. It contained chalices, candlesticks, crucifixes, of solid gold, encrusted with precious stones. Some of these golden candlesticks required



CATHEDRAL OF GUADALAJARA.

two men to lift them. The statue of the Assumption (now missing) was of solid gold, and cost $1,089,000! There was a lamp of gold that cost eighty thousand dollars. Around the choir is a balustrade, of a metal so precious (a mixture of silver, gold, and bronze) that an offer to replace it with one of equal weight *in silver*, was refused. This weighed twenty-six tons, and was brought from China during those ancient days of Spanish dominion. All these riches (the half of which have not been described) were acquired when bishop, priest, and monk were rulers of New Spain, and owned two-thirds the entire wealth of the nation!

Towards the end of this history we shall see how these parasites were made to relax their hold upon the people's earnings, and compelled by popular indignation to disgorge their ill-gotten gains.

Three years previously the cathedral of Guadalajara was commenced, which was not completed until 1818, having consumed nearly two hundred and fifty years in building. During this same year of 1571, in which was established the Inquisition in Mexico, occurred an eruption of the great volcano of Popocatapetl, an event infrequent enough to excite general terror and apprehension.

[A. D. 1576.] A frightful pestilence visited Mexico, and during the year it is estimated that more than two million Indians died of its ravages. In 1580 the capital was again inundated, owing to abundant rains, and great local distress followed. At this time, however, New Spain was apparently enjoying a period of prosperity. Owing to the enforced labor of the Indians in her mines she was producing immense quantities of silver. Lying directly between the oriental colony in the Philippines and Spain, the mother country, her sea-ports — Acapulco on the Pacific, and Vera Cruz on the Gulf coast, had become rich and thriving

cities. People from the extremes of the world met in her capital and transacted business; but while the golden stream of wealth and trade flowed from the west to the east no portion of it fell to the share of the poor Indian. Bowed down with misery and grief, he was compelled to toil early and late for the aggrandizement of an empire far distant over the sea.

[A. D. 1583.] Through frequent changes and the loose administration of the *oidores* of the Audiencia the government officials became very corrupt. To correct this state of affairs Philip II. appointed the Archbishop of Mexico, Pedro Moya de Contreras, *visitador*, with power to thoroughly search into their conduct, and to bring them to justice. This man was also *inquisitor*, and through the combined influence of his spiritual and temporal authority he purified the local government, so far as loyalty to the king was concerned. Soon appointed to the viceroyal chair, he diverted a large current of gold and silver towards the mother country.

[A. D. 1585.] His successor, Alvarado Enrique de Zuñiga, arrived in October, 1585, and carried out the wise principles of government established by the inquisitor. In 1587 he likewise sent a rich treasure fleet to Spain, which reached its port in safety. Such was not the fate of all the treasure galleons that succeeded these pioneer vessels, as the attention of other powers was becoming directed towards that source of Spain's wealth and power. The seas on both coasts of Mexico soon became infested with pirates, called by courtesy "privateers," and "buccaneers." The French and English were very annoying, especially the latter, headed by the famous Captain Drake. After capturing and sacking Spanish cities on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts he turned his attention to the rich galleons which made annual voyages between the Philippines and

Mexico. Concealing himself among the coves of the Lower California coast he lay in wait for the richly freighted vessel, plundered it of its valuable cargo, and made his escape, though vigorous search was instituted by order of the viceroy. As only one ship came in a year this loss was severely felt by the colonists, as the merchants had them almost at their mercy

[A. D. 1590.] Internal troubles added to the vexations of the viceroy, who was recalled to Spain, and his place filled by another, Count Luis Velasco, son of the second viceroy under Charles V. This sagacious ruler labored earnestly for the amelioration of the condition of the Indians, and, contrary to the wishes of the foreign traders, encouraged native manufactures of cotton and woollen stuffs. In 1591 the Chichimecs, who had always manifested a hostile disposition towards the Spaniards, were brought to adopt the ways of civilized life by the settlement among them of several hundred of the ever-faithful Tlascallans. In this manner was commenced that important town so noted in the annals of mining history, San Luis Potosi. The Spaniards were not so fortunate in their attempts to compel the wandering *Otomies* to abandon a savage life, as the first savage experimented upon not only destroyed his habitation but murdered his family and then hung himself.

[A. D. 1593.] It was under this viceroy that there was laid out and planted the beautiful forest garden of Mexico, the *Alameda*, in existence to-day, one of the most delightful spots in that land of perpetual summer. Its walks and avenues intersect a shady grove of poplars and eucalyptus trees, beneath which are beds of flowers sprinkled by the spray of cooling fountains.

[A. D. 1594.] The oppressed Indians were still further burdened by the mercenary Philip with a tax of one dollar

each, the imposition of which the viceroy strove in vain to avert, and which was the cause of much suffering. In 1595 this viceroy was promoted to Peru, his seat being taken by Don Gaspar de Zuniga, Count of Monterey, who exhibited his firmness and humanity by relieving the Indians of that odious tax. In 1596 an expedition was fitted out for the exploration of the California coast, and colonists started for New Mexico, the land of the Pueblos, from which they later returned dissatisfied with the country.

The year 1597 is celebrated in Mexican annals as that in which perished "Saint Philip of Jesus," a native of Mexico, who was crucified in Japan, whither he had gone on missionary work.

[A. D. 1598.] Philip II. of Spain, the ferocious persecutor of his race and kindred, did the world an unwilling service by dying, and his loathsome, worm-infested body was consigned to earth. The news of this important event did not reach Mexico till 1599, in which year the city of Monterey was founded.

[A. D. 1600.] In the year following, 1600, the city of Vera Cruz was transferred from its ancient site, where it had been located by Cortez, to the one it at present occupies, in the vain hope that the last would prove more salubrious.

[A. D. 1602.] The coast of California, which in our time became *El Dorado* — the land of gold — was thorougly explored, in 1602, by General Viscaino, by order of Philip III., the new King of Spain and the Indies. Setting sail from the port of Acapulco with four vessels he reached the port of Monterey — named in honor of the viceroy — and eventually coasted as far as Cape Mendocino, in latitude 40° north. Cabrillo, a Portuguese in the service of Spain, discovered California in the year 1542, and the buccaneer, Drake, took possession of it for Queen



SPANISH MISSION, MONTEREY.

Elizabeth in 1578, naming it New Albion; but nearly two hundred years passed before any attempt to plant a colony here resulted in success.

The opening years of the seventeenth century saw the Spaniards in possession of a vast amount of territory north, south, east, and west of Mexico, chiefly acquired through expeditions planned and started from the central city. During these first years, it is alleged, the Indians voluntarily returned to the old system of *repartimientos*, by which they were assigned to the miners and planters as laborers, in reality slaves. It is claimed that their natural indolence moved them to this; but such is contrary to what is recorded by those interested in their welfare.

[A. D. 1607.] The early years of this century were also made memorable by another inundation; and in 1607, as it was found that the dikes erected at various times were insufficient to protect the city, a stupendous undertaking was set in progress, no less than the drainage of the entire valley! It was under the patronage of Don Louis Belasco, who had been again returned from Peru to the viceroyalty of Mexico, and under the direction of a celebrated engineer, Enrique Martinez.

The valley of Mexico is an immense basin, situated about 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. It contains five lakes, rising in stages one above the other, the uppermost, Lake Zumpango, being over thirty feet higher than Lake Tezcoco; which is only five or six feet lower than the level of the great square of Mexico. As a consequence, when any great rains flood the upper lake its waters rush with great fury towards the lower one, which sets back towards the city in spite of the dikes built to protect it. The plan of the engineer, Martinez, was to dig a subterraneous canal through the valley brim, by which Lake Zumpango would be thoroughly drained. This tunnel was commenced on

the 28th of November, 1607. Fifteen thousand Indians worked incessantly for eleven months, at the end of which time the tunnel was completed. It was six thousand six hundred meters in length, over three meters in height and four in breadth, and was continued at its northern end by an open cut eight thousand six hundred meters in length, that conducted the water of the lake into the river Tula, which finally makes its way into the Gulf of Mexico.

This tunnel having become stopped up, either by accident or design, the city was at once flooded in a single night, and for five years, from 1629 to 1634, the people traversed the flooded streets in canoes.

In 1637 the Franciscan monks secured control of the work, which they held for over a hundred years, and diverted through this channel a vast amount of gold into their treasury; though the water flowed no more freely than before. In 1767 it was decided to convert this subterranean canal into an open cut, as it frequently became choked, and endangered the city. Thousands of Indians lost their lives in both undertakings; but life was cheap in those days, and labors were performed that to-day it would be impossible to execute.

At a cost of a million dollars, the cut was concluded, in the year 1789. It was then 67,537 feet in length, and in some places, at the top, over 600 feet in breadth, with a perpendicular depth of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet!

This was the great *tajo*, or cut, of Nochistongo, which had cost, at the beginning of the present century only, over $6,000,000 and a vast number of lives. It performed its work ineffectually, and the government of Mexico is yet considering, — at this day, two hundred and seventy-five years after the tunnel was dug, — how it should properly drain the great valley in the centre of which is the magnificent cap-



MINES, VICEREGAL PERIOD.

ital of Mexico. Enrique Martinez, the great Mexican engineer, is finally honored by a statue in the plaza of the city, and through the cut commenced by him so many years ago runs the track of a railroad, seeking exit from the valley.

From 1611 to 1621 two other viceroys occupied the capital, and the year 1612 was distinguished by a serious insurrection of the Indians, which was only subdued after several months' hard fighting.

[A. D. 1620.] The aqueduct of San Cosme, a magnificent monument to the viceroy, the Marques of Guadalcazar, was finished in 1620. Its nine hundred arches still stride across the fertile fields between Chapultepec and the capital, and over it still flow the sweet waters from the hills of *El Desierto*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE REIGN OF THE VICEROYS. — *Concluded.*

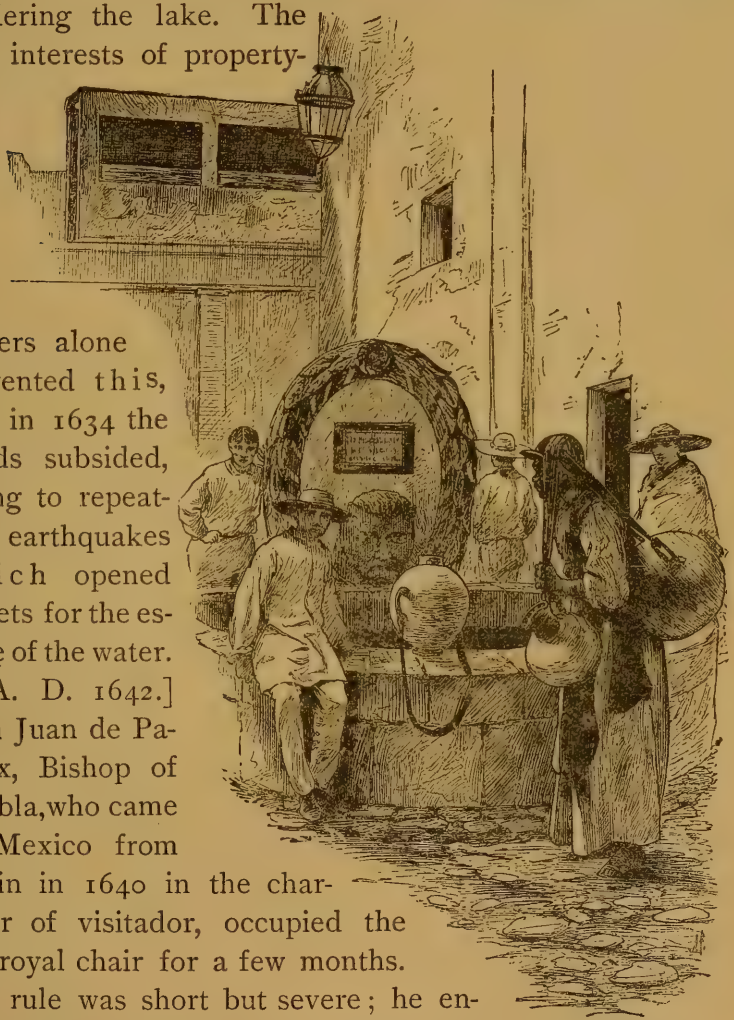
[A. D. 1621–1810.] VICEROY and Audiencia continued to rule the people of Mexico in the interests of the Kings of Spain. The almost imbecile Philip III. having been succeeded by the equally incapable Philip IV., affairs in Mexico did not prosper much.

Between the viceroys and the arch-prelates there was a continual struggle for the ascendency. In 1624 occurred a great riot caused by a scarcity of corn. It was charged upon the viceroy that an agent of his had bought up all the maize at low rates, and was holding it for famine prices. The Archbishop of Mexico, a man of upright character, took sides with the people as against the viceroy, and the latter expelled him from the city. The archbishop promptly excommunicated the viceroy, and ordered all the churches to be closed until the people should have their demands satisfied. The matter ended with an attack upon the palace by a mob, the burning of the viceroyal residence and the departure of both bishop and viceroy from Spain.

Philip IV. promptly dispatched an inquisitor to Mexico to bring the rioters to justice, and a new viceroy to fill the vacant seat of government.

[A. D. 1624.] A new enemy to Spanish commerce now appeared in Mexican waters, the Dutch, who this year captured Acapulco, on the Pacific coast, and in 1628 intercepted a large fleet of treasure-vessels on their way from Vera Cruz to Spain. In 1629 the city was over-

whelmed by the great inundation (of which we have already spoken), and in 1631 was seriously considered the project of removing the capital to Tacubaya, on the hills bordering the lake. The vast interests of property-owners alone prevented this, and in 1634 the floods subsided, owing to repeated earthquakes which opened outlets for the escape of the water.



AT THE FOUNTAIN.

[A. D. 1642.] Don Juan de Palafox, Bishop of Puebla, who came to Mexico from Spain in 1640 in the character of visitador, occupied the viceroyal chair for a few months. His rule was short but severe; he encouraged education and religion, but signalized his advent by destroying a great number of idols and objects of antiquity that had been preserved as souvenirs of the conquest. In a word, he was a bigot, and as determined a foe to aboriginal culture, and strove as hard

to eradicate all vestiges of it, as the infamous Zumárraga of the century previous. After the arrival of the succeeding viceroy, he was continued in his office of visitador, and made a great deal of trouble, especially in Puebla, by his domineering spirit.

In 1648 the Inquisition procured the punishment of an apostate, and later on, in 1659, celebrated an *auto da fé* at which *fifty victims* were burned alive. At this dreadful act the viceroy presided, and the Indians flocked in from all directions to witness a scene that revived recollections of the horrid rites of their Aztec ancestors.

The bigoted ruler of this period was the Duke of Albuquerque, who narrowly escaped assassination in the year 1660, and departed for Spain.

The Indians of Sinaloa and Chihuahua, the Tarahumares, revolted in 1649, and continued in rebellion for over twenty years, successfully resisting all Spanish forces sent into their native valleys and mountains to subdue them, until the year 1670.

[A. D. 1665.] Philip IV. died in 1665, and left the kingdom to his son, a sickly boy of four years, under the regency of his mother, whose amours were the talk of the court. It could not be expected that poor Mexico would receive much attention, except as she was able to furnish funds to the royal debauchees, yet she was not badly governed on the whole.

In 1667 the dedication of the grand cathedral took place, after two millions of dollars had been expended upon it and a century of toil.

The year 1673 is memorable in viceroyal annals as that in which a lineal descendant of Columbus, the great navigator, was despatched to New Spain, Don Pedro Nuño de Colon, Duke of Veraguas, and Knight of the Golden Fleece, was the twenty-sixth viceroy of Mexico. He was

old and decrepit, and hardly survived his voyage to this new world, which had been given to Spain by his illustrious ancestor.

In 1661 the Tehuantepecs revolted, but were soon pacified, chiefly through the efforts of the clergy. In the same year the inhabitants of the valley of Mexico were terrified by another eruption of the great volcano, Popocatapetl. About this period the pirates became very troublesome. making the island of Jamaica (which had recently been captured from the Spaniards by the English) their rendezvous.

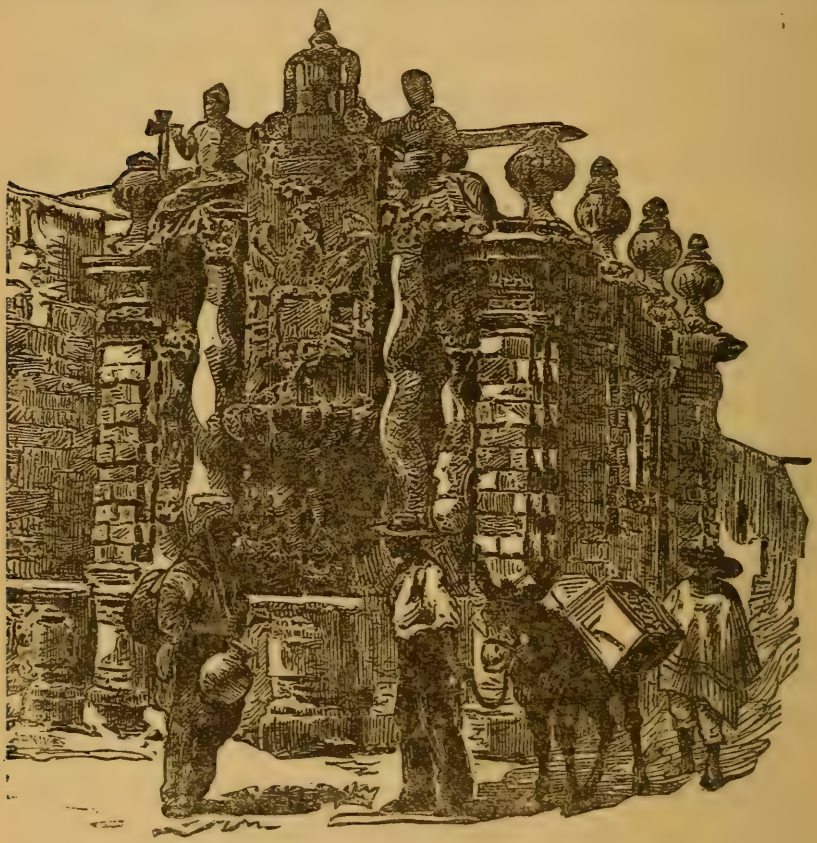
[A. D. 1680.] The aborigines of New Mexico, some twenty-five thousand in number, and residing in twenty-four villages, rose in rebellion in November, 1680, driving the Spaniards to their defences in Santa Fé, their northern capital. From this point they were at last expelled, and forced to seek refuge within the present limits of Mexico; and it was a long while before these usually peaceful people, the Pueblos, were again subjected to Spanish rule.

[A. D. 1683.] On the 17th of May, 1683, Vera Cruz, the only port of importance on the eastern coast, became the prey of an English pirate, the celebrated Agramont, who sacked it completely, obtaining property to the amount of seven millions of dollars.

[A. D. 1686.] A colony was despatched to that portion of Mexican territory now belonging to the United States, and known as Texas, and another expedition sent to California; the town of Monoclova, in the State of Coahuila, was also founded at this time.

In 1687 the volcano of Orizaba, now extinct, treated the Mexicans to an exhibition of its powers in a great eruption. It was during the reign of the viceroy of this period that there was constructed the celebrated aqueduct which conducts the water from the springs of Chapultepec to the city, and which is known as the *Salto del Agua.*

[A. D. 1690.] The island of Hispaniola (Haiti), then in possession of the French, was successfully attacked by troops sent from Mexico, and the victors returned to Vera Cruz with much booty and many prisoners. In the year following the crops were destroyed by hail and frosts, and



TERMINATION OF AQUEDUCT.

great scarcity ensued. The energetic viceroy, the Count de Galve, sought to alleviate the wants of the poor by purchasing corn, but they construed this act as one of oppression (having in mind the doings of another viceroy in a previous time of famine), and attacked the palace, setting fire to it, and destroying it and the public buildings

containing the valuable records of events since the conquest. The authorities retaliated by hanging the leaders of the mob, and depriving the lower classes of their favorite beverage, the *pulque.* It was estimated that property to the amount of at least three millions of dollars was destroyed in the conflagration.

[A. D. 1694.] The year 1693 was one of plenty, but was followed by another of scarcity, and by a plague that destroyed thousands, while in 1695 an earthquake caused the inhabitants of the city of Mexico to shake with dread. Another expedition was fitted out in this last year for the complete expulsion of the French from Hispaniola, in which the English and Spanish, acting in unison, were perfectly successful. Pirates and privateers multiplied so fast that the sailors of Spain were in danger in whatever waters they sailed. Especially did the foreign freebooters covet the treasure-laden galleons that made annual voyages in fleets to Spain. The French at one time, in the year 1696, lay in wait near Havana to intercept the fleet of that year when it should pass on its way from Vera Cruz to the mother country. They were disappointed, however, for the Spanish authorities, getting notice of this enemy in ambush, delayed the fleet from spring till autumn. The French, thinking their coveted prize must have escaped them, sailed for Europe, where they later learned, to their great chagrin, that the galleons had arrived safely in Cadiz, and the duties alone on their cargoes amounted to nearly half a million dollars.

In the year 1696 another owner of an illustrious name was appointed viceroy of Mexico, Don José Sarmiento Valladeres, *Count of Montezuma.* He was not a descendant of the great Indian king, but acquired his title by marriage with the fourth grand-daughter of the Aztec emperor, the third Countess of Montezuma.

[A. D. 1697.] In the January following the arrival of the Count of Montezuma a richly-freighted galleon arrived in the port of Acapulco from the Philippine islands laden with rare and curious stuffs from the Orient. Merchants and traders flocked here from all parts of Mexico, and even from Peru, to buy the Chinese merchandise. The merchants from the rich viceroyalty of Peru expended over $2,000,000 at the fair subsequently held, in which the rich cargo was sold. Earthquakes disturbed the peace of the people at this time, and threatened famine reduced their supplies of corn, but the viceroy judiciously ministered to the people's wants, and abundant crops soon followed.

There were two things in Mexico that kept the people in a constant state of fear, these were the volcano Popocatapetl and the *Inquisition*. The earth was shaken by an eruption of the former, though unattended by loss of life, and a worthy gentleman was burned at the stake by the latter.

The seventeenth century ended uneventfully and left the principal powers of Europe apparently at peace with each other, and the viceroyalty of Mexico still firmly attached to the mother country.

[A. D. 1700.] By the death of Charles II. the Spanish crown passed to the Bourbons of France, a prince of that house being proclaimed king, with the title of Philip V. In the ten years of war that followed, during which the king was engaged in expelling the Austrians and English from his territory, Mexico remained firm in her allegiance. One viceroy succeeded another, and no notable events occurred except the occasional attacks of privateers upon the treasure-fleets for some time after the opening of the century.

The year 1711 was long remembered by a fall of snow, the first ever seen at the capital, and in the same year oc-

curred an earthquake so strong that the bells in the churches were set ringing, and which lasted for half an hour. Frequent meteorological phenomena disturbed Mexico during the decade ending in 1720, including disastrous hurricanes, and Popocatapetl added an eruption to his already long catalogue.

In 1719 war was declared between France and Spain, and Pensacola, in Florida, was captured by the French. In 1720 the church of the Profesa, still standing in Mexico, was dedicated. The attention of the government was directed to the north, to Texas, California, and New Mexico, where the colonies sent out by it were meeting with varying success.

[A. D. 1722.] This year was signalized by the arrival in Mexico of a *creole* viceroy — one born in America — all the others had been natives of Spain, with little love for the country they were called upon to govern. The Marquis of Casa Fuerte labored diligently to purify the corrupt court of Mexico and to promote the welfare of his subjects. It was during his reign that Philip IV. abdicated in favor of his son, Ferdinand, and later resumed the throne vacated by his death. He dispatched colonies to the northward, and among other places founded San Antonio, Texas, to-day belonging to the United States. Commerce increased, and the galleons to and from New Spain were more richly laden than ever, one of these coming from China, in 1731, landed a cargo of oriental products so rich that the duties to government alone amounted to above one hundred and seventy thousand dollars. This viceroy, who had the interests of his country ever at heart, died in 1734, leaving a large part of his wealth to benevolent objects.

[A. D. 1741.] Peace reigned in Mexico, but in other Spanish colonies war was desolating their coasts. General

Oglethorpe was at this time making his unsuccessful attack upon Saint Augustine, Florida, and the English admiral, Vernon, took Porto Bello and the forts of Cartagena.

In 1736 there visited Mexico a terrible epidemic, called *Matlazahuatl*, which carried off many thousands of the inhabitants, and it was at this time, and with the motive of



VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE.

obtaining divine succor, that the Virgin of Guadalupe was declared the patron saint of the country. Mention has already been made of this saint, and a slight sketch of her first appearance in Mexico may not be uninteresting.

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE.

It was in the year 1531, during the residence in Mexico of that rude iconoclast, Zumárraga, on the 9th day of December, that a poor Indian might have been seen trudging over the hill of Tepeyacac on his way to early mass. As this man of humble birth, Juan Diego by name, approached the brow of the hill, he heard his name called in a low, sweet voice. Looking up he saw a wonderful apparition, no less than a beautiful lady in the centre of a white and shining cloud, and surrounded by a rainbow. A voice issued from this wondrous vision commanding him to go to the Bishop of Mexico and tell him that she, the apparition, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, desired him to build on that spot a chapel in her honor. The trembling Indian obeyed, but the bishop refused credence to his story without a sign, and he returned dejected to the hill. A second time the Virgin appeared, and upon his request for a sign commanded him to go to the the top of the hill and fill his blanket with the flowers he should find there. Though wondering that it should be possible to discover flowers in a perfectly desert spot, where never yet grew anything but cactus and prickly-pear, Juan Diego went to the spot indicated, where he found a bed of lovely flowers, fragrant and wet with dew. "Carry these to the bishop," said the Virgin, "and tell him my commands."

When the wondering Indian prostrated himself at the feet of the bishop, lo! another miracle was wrought, for the flowers had disappeared, and in their place was seen a most beautiful image of the Holy Lady. The prelate was struck with astonishment at this great miracle, and reverently bearing the coarse blanket into his oratory gave thanks to God for so striking a manifestation of His power.

This is the story, in brief, as related by the early priests; and it has been the means of bringing into the church many

a wandering Indian, who would otherwise have rejected the preaching of those holy men. It touched their national pride, to be told that this miracle was wrought for their benefit, and that the apparition appeared to one of the lowest of their race. Contributions for the building of the chapel poured in from every quarter, and there now stands upon the site of the hermitage, erected in 1532, upon the spot where the Virgin appeared, a magnificent structure dedicated to the most adorable Virgin of Guadalupe. Do you not give full credence to this story? Then enter the grand interior of that church, built in memory of this event, and walk down the nave and stand before the high altar. There you will see, securely framed in crystal glass, and once surrounded by a golden frame, that famous picture of the Virgin, stamped by supernatural agency upon the coarse *tilma* of Juan Diego, in December, 1531! Processions in her honor visit that church to-day, and her shrine, the chapel on the hill, is the goal of many a weary pilgrim. The spring of chalybeate water, and full of virtues, that gushed forth from the rock on which the blessed Virgin stamped her foot, still flows, and is the resort of thousands.

[A. D. 1743.] Returning to our chronology, we shall find that the Spaniards met with a great loss in the year 1743, in the capture, by the English admiral, Anson, of the East Indian galleon containing a cargo worth two millions of dollars! It was laden chiefly with silver, and was on its way to the East Indies to purchase those Oriental fabrics which found such quick sales in the marts of Mexico, when the English buccaneer pounced upon it from his hiding-place near Acapulco.

[A. D. 1746.] Under the viceroy who came into power this year, the Count of Revilla Gigedo, the royal revenues were largely increased, mines of silver and gold continued

to be discovered, and even at this early period, during his viceroyalty, the average annual yield was over $11,000,000. During his term of office, nine years, there was coined, in the national mint, silver to the amount of over one hundred and fourteen millions of dollars. The city of Mexico was now very populous and the people wealthy, though the taxes were excessive and fell heavily upon the Indians and laboring classes.

[A. D. 1750.] In 1749 the crops were blighted by frosts, and a partial famine ensued the following year, corn becoming so scarce in the provinces of Zacatecas and Guanajuato that it sold at sixty dollars per hundred pounds.

Between 1750 and 1760 great veins of silver were discovered and vast quantities of the precious ore extracted from the bowels of the earth.

The year 1759 was perhaps the most notable of this epoch, as that in which occurred a terrestrial convulsion without a parallel in history. In the state of Michoacan, once the ancient kingdom of the Tarascos, an immense volcano burst forth in a single night, on the 29th of September. The plain of Malpais was once covered with fertile sugar-cane and indigo plantations, but in June, 1759, hollow rumblings began to be heard, followed by flames and earthquakes. In September came the terrible eruptions, when six great volcanic cones were thrown up, the smallest of which was 300 feet and the largest 1,500! In this manner and at this time was formed the active volcano of Jorullo, which exists to-day, and covers the site of those fertile plains where agriculture once flourished.

[A. D. 1761.] The capture of Havana by the English threw New Spain into consternation, although the expected attack upon Vera Cruz was not made. Soldiers, gathered for the defence of the coast, fell victims to fever;

and two years later, the small-pox carried off ten thousand people in the capital alone.

In 1765 the visitador, Galvez, placed a tax upon the producers and manufacturers of tobacco, which existed for nearly a century, until 1856.

[A. D. 1767.] It was during the visit of this royal inspector that the Jesuits were expelled from Mexico. Silently, and with great precautions against their escape, all the Jesuits of New Spain were surrounded by the Spanish troops and collected in Vera Cruz, whence they were sent to Europe. This was in the month of June; three months before, by the orders of the same monarch, Charles III. of Spain, a similar outrage had been perpetrated in the mother country. The members of this intelligent, though perhaps dangerous, order, were totally expelled from the dominions of the King of Spain. Untold suffering resulted, as many perished of fever in Vera Cruz, during their passage across the ocean, and in the countries in which they were landed. Among these so unceremoniously driven from Mexico were men since famous in literature, most notable of whom stands the learned Clavigero, who wrote the best history of early Mexico extant, and whose writings, notwithstanding the indignities to which he was subjected, are entirely free from the coloring of jealousy or prejudice.

The raids of the English induced the government to appropriate large sums for the coast defences, and several millions were expended in this way during a short period following.

HOW A POOR MULETEER BECAME COUNT OF REGLA.

[A. D. 1770 to 1780.] Mines of gold and silver now yielded fabulous returns. The fleet that left Mexico for Spain in 1773 carried over $26,000,000 in precious metals; while that of the year following was laden with a cargo

equally rich. In seven years, between 1771 and 1779, the mines of Mexico yielded over *one hundred and twenty-seven million dollars* in gold and silver — chiefly silver. One great miner alone, in the course of eight years, presented for taxation four thousand seven hundred bars of silver. All this vast amount of silver paid a *fifth* of its value to the king. The "royal fifth" continued to be exacted up to the time of the revolution.

By this single abstract from the history of Mexico at that period we may see that, while the British colonies in America were struggling for independence, the Spanish colonists of America were delving in the mines to furnish the mother country with money to carry on her wars. While our forefathers were fighting to free our country from tyranny the Mexicans were riveting yet more strongly the golden chains that bound them to their oppressor!

The great mines of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Pachuca were industriously worked at this period, and, in fact, have continued to be ever since. Men made fortunes in a very short time; companies of men amassed millions, and there seemed, indeed, no end to the amount of treasure the earth was now yielding up.

At this period flourished a remarkable man named Peter Terreros, who, in 1750, conceived the idea of draining an abandoned mine and reopening it. He commenced life as a poor muleteer. He worked at his project twelve years — until 1762. At the end of that time he had only just reached the main shaft; but even then he had cleared half a million of dollars yearly, and had laid up an amount equal to 500,000 pounds weight of solid silver! But his good fortune had just commenced; he drew from that abandoned mine an amount of precious metal well-nigh fabulous. He could not devise ways enough to spend his money. He built two large ships-of-the-line and gave

them to his king, and promised his sovereign that if he would only visit him in Mexico he should everywhere tread only upon silver — that he would pave the road from the coast to the mines with solid silver bars!

When this man's children were baptized the entire procession, as it passed from his house to the church, walked all the way upon glistening silver bars! What wonder that, in those corrupt times, this man, possessed of fabulous wealth, should have been created Count of Regla! Yet all his great possessions have long since vanished — swept away in the revolution — and his descendants were reduced to beggary.

In the year 1778 there died another famous miner, named La Bord, who accumulated a fortune of fifty million dollars, and who spent upon a single church more than half a million.

No one can estimate what would have been the result if these mines had been uninterruptedly worked, nor the benefit to Spain if Mexico had been retained in her possession to the present time.

[A. D. 1785.] The Spanish government became alarmed about this time at the persistence of the then reigning viceroy, Galvez, in fortifying and embellishing the Castle of Chapultepec. Up to that time above one hundred thousand dollars had been expended upon it, and it was then the strongest citadel in the interior of Mexico. But their fears were allayed upon the death of the viceroy, and the beautiful castle was not dismantled until a date long subsequent.

[A. D. 1788.] In December of this year the King of Spain, Charles III., departed this life, and was succeeded on the throne by the weak and dissolute Charles IV. In the year following there entered the capital as viceroy one of the most remarkable who had filled the office, Don Juan

Vincente Pacheco, second Count of Revilla Gigedo. He found the capital swarming with robbers and assassins, whom he soon brought to justice; the streets obstructed by filth and ditches, which he soon cleansed; and the poor oppressed, whom he soon relieved. He started a botanical garden, which exists to-day in a state of abandonment; built roads, established a postal service with other cities and the frontier, and promoted expeditions to the northward, especially along the coast of California.

He never trusted entirely to the supervision of his officers, but himself personally inspected the improvements he was constantly promoting. On one occasion he aroused his inspector of streets from his sleep at midnight, and commanded him to immediately repair some trifling irregularity in the pavement. On another, as he was walking through a by-street, he found himself brought abruptly to a halt by an obstruction of beggarly dwellings. Sending at once for the street commissioner he commanded him to extend the street through to the limits of the city. "Before morning," he commanded, "you will finish this road so that I may drive through it on my way to early mass." It was then sunset; but, stimulated by fear of the consequences in case of non-fulfilment, the commissioner summoned a host of Indians, tore down the filthy abodes of misery, and, as the viceregal coach appeared next morning, a way was opened through which it drove.

In 1790 they discovered, buried in the great plaza, that historic memento of barbarism, the great Aztec sacrificial stone, which now adorns the court of the National Museum. The energetic viceroy returned to Spain, leaving behind him a memory that yet lives in the hearts of the people of of Mexico.

[A. D. 1796.] In this year war was declared against England by Spain, with results (as we shall shortly see) indirectly fatal to the security of her colonial possessions.

In 1797 the foundations were laid for the magnificent building, still standing in Mexico, known as the *Mineria*, or school of mines. It was finished in 1814 at a total cost of a million and a half of dollars.

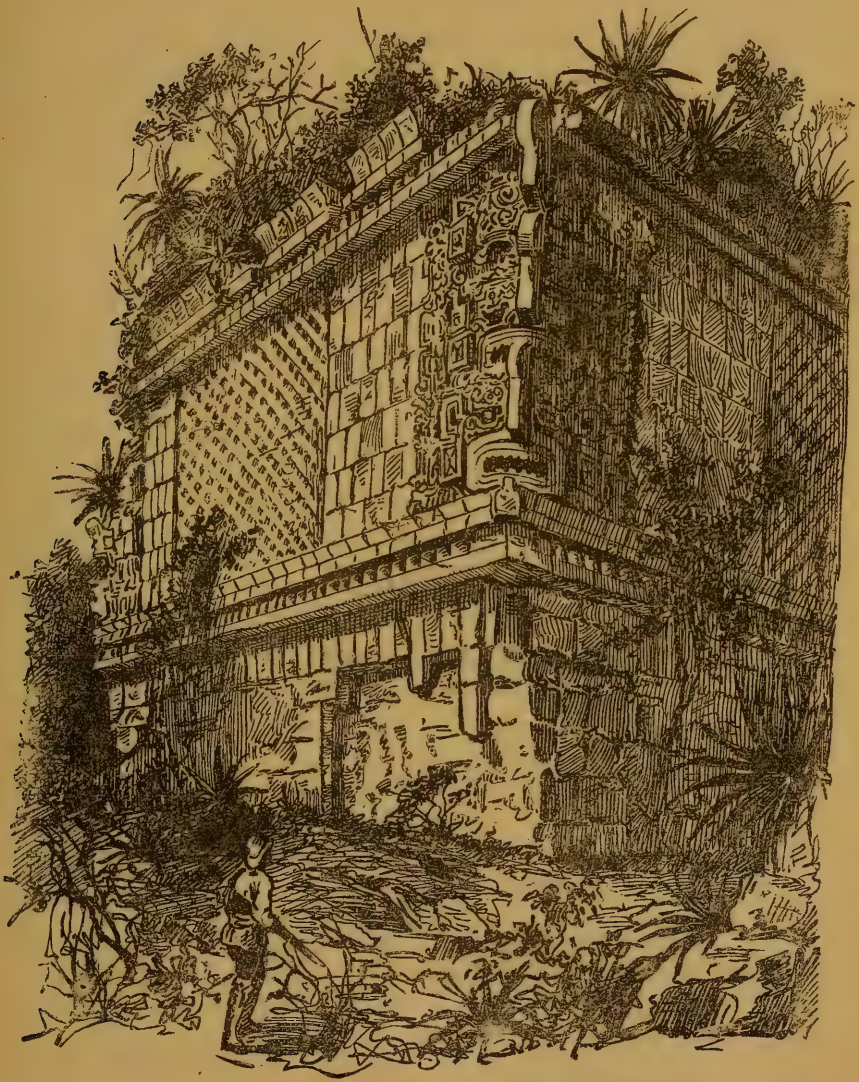
As a consequence of the war with England the seas were filled with English cruisers, and the vast exports of bullion to Spain were in a great measure prevented. By means of this money retained in the country Mexico began to feel the impulse of quickened trade, her *internal* commerce was attended to, looms were erected, factories built, and it soon became apparent that she was less dependent upon the mother country than her people had generally believed.

[A. D. 1800.] In fostering trade and developing internal resources the viceroy had been working in opposition to the plan which Spain had pursued for nearly three centuries. As the nineteenth century opened it brought with it the dawn of a new life. Thrown upon their own resources, the people found that they needed the support of no other country in the world. In a word, they found that they had within themselves all the elements of an independent nation! This was at first only dimly apparent to a few; the masses did not recognize it; they had been too long accustomed to do their thinking by proxy. But with the opening of the century might have been heard, by an observant ear, the first mutterings of that great storm that was so soon to sweep over Mexico and deluge her soil with blood!

The year that closed the eighteenth century brought with it an earthquake so terrible that the inhabitants of the Mexican valley were filled with terror, and long remembered this visitation, which they called the "earthquake of Saint John of God."

In 1803 a new viceroy, Don Jose Iturrigaray, was sent out from Spain. He was active and energetic, but avari-

cious. He personally inspected the great mines of Guanajuato, and caused to be completed the great work known



FAÇADE OF CASA DE LAS MONJAS.

as the "king's bridge" on the chief highway between Vera Cruz and the capital, and now known as the *Puente Nacional.*

[A. D. 1803.] In the same year there arrived in Mexico, by way of the Pacific, coming up from South America, one whose name will survive that of all the viceroys of New Spain. The illustrious *Humboldt* set foot on Mexican soil in March, 1803, and spent a year in an examination of Mexico's resources and her historic monuments. His work, a "Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain," caused an awakened interest in that country, and first pointed out to the Spaniards themselves the exceeding richness of the territory they were about to lose forever.

[A. D. 1808.] When, in 1808, Napoleon forced the corrupt Charles IV. to abdicate, and his equally despicable son to relinquish all claims to the Spanish throne in favor of Joseph Bonaparte, the French usurper was better received in Spain than in Mexico. The Spanish-born residents of Mexico were, as a rule, in favor of Bonaparte as against the Spanish Bourbons; but the Creoles, the natives, were to a man faithful in their allegiance to the son of Charles IV., the Prince of Asturias, known as Ferdinand VII. They burned the proclamations sent out by Joseph, and arrested and sent prisoner to Spain the viceroy, Iturrigaray, for manifesting a tendency to recognize the Bonapartes. As yet, it seems, the inhabitants of Mexico had no thought of disloyalty to their sovereign; but they were perplexed to know *who their sovereign was*. Charles IV. had abdicated in favor of his son and then reclaimed the throne, while the mighty Napoleon had stepped in and wrested it from both, placing the crown upon his brother's brow. Proclamations and demands for treasure came pouring in from Spain, coming from the French king, from the deposed Ferdinand, and from the Junta, that assumed to rule in the name of the people. It was in the midst of this perplexing condition of affairs that people began to inquire as to the necessity of their being governed by Spain at all.

THE PERIOD OF INDEPENDENCE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE GREAT REVOLUTION.

[1810 to 1821.] THE first decisive blow for freedom was struck in the month of September, 1810. Don Miguel Hidalgo, *cura*, or parish priest, of the little town of Dolores, in the state of Guanajuato, was the one who first applied the firebrand to the combustible material that the past ten years had been accumulating. He was a well-educated man, a graduate of Saint Nicholas College in Valladolid, and had received sacred orders in Mexico in 1779. He was born in 1753, and was a man of great capacity, and well-instructed in agriculture and the industrial arts. He cultivated the vine and the mulberry in order to encourage his people in these labors, established small industries for their benefit, and by his labors for their good had entirely won their love and affection. This, in brief, was the man who placed himself at the head of the Mexican movement in 1810.

At the break of day, on the 15th of September, the patriot priest committed himself entirely to the cause of the people, and gave the watchword of *Independence!* It is known in history as the "Cry of Dolores." Thousands rallied about his banner; from mountains, from valleys,

from the seclusion of forest retreats, as well as from the midst of populous *haciendas*, the Indians and Creoles poured forth to join him. The day of vengeance had at last arrived! Three centuries of oppression had bequeathed to them its hatred of their foreign masters. The desire to avenge their wrongs, so long suppressed, now burst forth in uncontrollable fury.

They marched upon the noble city of Guanajuato, twenty thousand strong, armed only with sticks and staves, and with here and there a musket, but all animated with the same desire for the blood of their oppressors. Their war-cry was "*Death to the Guachupines!*" By this name they designated the Spaniards, the hated enslavers of their race. The Spaniards were attacked in the city of Guanajuato, and their stronghold fell before the savage fury of the Indians. For three days the insurgents rioted in murder and robbery. Their chief could not restrain them.

Then the warrior-priest set his forces in motion for the capital, for Mexico itself, and entered the valley in the last days of October with an army of near one hundred thousand men. Hidalgo met a Spanish army about twenty miles from the capital, attacked them with resistless fury and defeated them. When within fifteen miles of Mexico he halted, and, after a few days, commenced a retreat. There is little doubt that Hidalgo and his savage horde could have swept the valley and conquered the city had he but advanced instead of sounding a retreat. His prestige thenceforward was gone. The viceroy, Venagas, despatched General Calleja with an army of ten thousand men and a train of artillery in pursuit. He overtook them and gave battle, and though the Indians fought with unsurpassed bravery, the disciplined body of regular troops prevailed over the untrained masses. The Spanish troops were commanded by a fiend. Calleja marched upon

Guanajuato, took it, and not only put the defenders to the sword, but murdered in cold blood *fourteen thousand* defenceless men, women, and children. The streets ran blood, and even the fountains were choked with the life-current of these innocent victims.

Thus mournfully opened the first chapter of Mexican independence.

[A. D. 1811.] Rallying his scattered forces Hidalgo awaited his foe again near Guadalajara. Near the bridge of Calderon, on the 17th of January, 1811, the decisive battle was fought. The patriot chief had nearly 80,000 men under his command, but they were unskilled in warfare and very poorly armed. Hidalgo and his men at first prevailed, but superior discipline again showed its superiority over disorganized masses, and the battle was turned into a massacre. Hidalgo and other leaders, with a few thousand of his followers, escaped; it was their intention to reach the United States, and with a portion of the rich treasure obtained in the sacking of Guanajuato, purchase munitions of war and return to renew the struggle. But they were captured, through the treachery of a man named Elizondo, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be shot.

The names of the leaders of this great uprising, names cherished by native Mexicans to-day, were Hidalgo, Allende, Aldama, and Jimenez. With the execution of these brave men ended the first great popular uprising, on the first day of August, 1811. Their heads were cut off, carried to Guanajuato, and placed upon the four corners of the Castle of Grenaditas, where they had obtained their first victory over the Spanish defenders.

The first martyrs to liberty had fallen, but the friends of the cause were undismayed. They were scattered in every direction, fugitives from justice, but only waiting a leader and opportunity.

A. D. 1812. The remainder of the year 1811 passed quietly, but early in 1812, after penetrating to within twelve miles of the capital, the insurgents retired to the town of Cuautla, where they were besieged by the royal army. Morelos, who had assumed the leadership, made vacant by the death of Hidalgo, was a man of similar qualifications to the first, and educated in the same seminary of learning, in Valladolid. He was born in the year 1765, of humble parentage, and, though studiously inclined, could not gratify his thirst for knowledge till late in life. At Cuautla (now known as Cuautla Morelos) the patriots were besieged for sixty days, until, when on the verge of starvation, they effected a retreat. By rapid marching Morelos reached Orizaba, which he took, then Oaxaca, far in the south, and then marched upon and captured the important city of Acapulco, on the west coast.

[A. D. 1813.] In November, in the town of Chilpantzingo (in the present state of Guerrero) was assembled the first National Congress of Mexico, composed mainly of distinguished men, such as the historian Bustamente, and the patriot Ignacio Rayon, who had kept alive the spark of revolution after the death of Hidalgo.

THE FIRST DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

was made on the 16th of November, 1813, by which the Mexican people gave voice to their feelings, and declared their resolve to dissolve their connections with the throne of Spain. Slavery was declared abolished, as also imprisonment for debt, and the holding of monopolies. All men were declared *free and equal* before the law.

In the same month of November there appeared upon the scene a personage who subsequently filled an important place in Mexican history, Colonel *Augustin Iturbide*. He was then loyal to the king, and at the head of a large force

he encountered Morelos, and defeated him in Valladolid. Morelos was subsequently captured through treachery, sent to Mexico for trial, and shot. Indomitable to the last, he expressed himself contented to die, since he had founded and left behind him the beginning of an independent government. He knelt before his executioners, saying, "Lord, if I have done well, thou knowest it; if ill, to Thy infinite mercy I commend my soul." Then the volley was fired, and this great and generous soul passed from earth.

[A. D. 1814.] Persecuted on all sides, driven from post to post, the first Mexican Congress yet found time to draft a constitution for the Mexican people, dated from the forest of Apantzingo, October 22, 1814. It was a year before the death of Morelos, which sad event occurred December 22, 1815. Calleja, that man of execrable memory, occupied the viceregal chair from 1813 to 1816, and lost no opportunity for the murder of the patriots.

Other chiefs, acting in unison with Morelos, deserve our notice, though space prevents more than mention of their names. These were Guerrero, Alvarez, Bravo, Victoria, Osorno, Mier y Teran, Rayon, and Matamoros, the latter of whom was shot in August, 1814. The names of all these men, most of whom fell martyrs to the cause, have been kept in remembrance by a grateful people. States, provinces, and towns are called by their names, in this country for which they fought so desperately to free from oppression.

Examples of individual bravery and magnanimity might be cited that would fill pages with the chronicles of their daring deeds. Let one suffice: The generous Bravo took the town of Palmar by storm, capturing three hundred prisoners. These he immediately offered to the viceroy in exchange for one man, his father. The offer was rejected,

and Don Leonardo Bravo was led out to death at once. The son, learning of this, at once ordered *all the prisoners to be liberated*, saying, "I wish to put it out of my power to avenge my parent's death, lest in the first moments of grief the temptation should prove irresistible."

Can you find in the history of any people an example of greater magnanimity than that? There were heroes in those days! Our fathers fought no more fiercely in the American Revolution, nor prolonged the struggle with less encouragement, than these fathers of Mexican independence.

Soon after the death of Morelos Congress was disbanded, and the people no longer had a central point upon which to focus their gaze. But its principles lived! It had done its work in teaching the masses the first lesson of freedom!

From the year 1816, through 1820, Juan de Apodaca, Count of Venadito, represented the royal power in New Spain. His mild rule was admirably adapted to the conciliation of the dissatisfied Indians and Creoles.

In 1817 the disbanded rebels received new encouragement from an unexpected source. There was in Spain a guerilla chief named Xavier Mina, who had fought against the Bonapartes, and who, having failed in exciting a revolution, fled to Mexico with many adherents. Landing on the coast with three hundred and fifty men, he successively defeated different parties sent against him, and on one occasion took a fortified hacienda, with a booty of one hundred and forty thousand dollars. Not meeting with the aid he had anticipated from the Independents, he was at last driven to bay in the central part of the state of Guanajuato, where, overwhelmed by the numerous forces sent against him, he fell, bravely fighting to the last. Thus terminated the short, though glorious, career of this



A HACIENDA.

champion of Mexican independence, in a little over six months from the time of his landing.

There was now but one rebel chief in the field. The viceroy considered the rebellion crushed. But this one leader, alone, after all the others had been captured, or availed themselves of the pardon offered by the viceroy, maintained alive the sacred fire of liberty and independence. *Don Vicente Guerrero* — a name that should ever be sacred to Mexicans — retreated with his followers to the fastnesses of the mountains, where he protected the members of the persecuted Junta, or Congress, and whence he made frequent sallies upon the enemy. Born of humble parentage, in 1782, his youth was passed (as was that of the great Morelos) in the occupation of a muleteer. In 1810 he cast his lot with the revolutionists, and soon became famous for his valor, for his clemency to the vanquished, and his activity in the campaigns. Resisting every bribe held out to him by the Spaniards, he retired to the mountains of the south. The year 1819 was the most fortunate of any for the patriots, for in it they had triumphed in twenty actions with the Spanish troops.

[A. D. 1820.] In the year 1820 Colonel Augustin Iturbide, who had been appointed commander of the troops of the west, surprised the whole country by declaring himself in favor of the independence of Mexico. It was the defection of this energetic military chief, and the self-denial of the brave Guerrero, that gave the favorable turn to affairs at this critical period of Mexico's history, and brought to a conclusion a war that had raged during ten years, and had drenched with blood the soil of New Spain. This remarkable man was born in the city of Valladolid (now Morelia, in honor of Morelos) in the year 1783. From his youth he had been in the royal service, and since the year 1808 had thrown all his influence

against the cause of his native land. He was celebrated for his bravery, his activity, and skill in strategy. On the 16th of November, 1820, he marched forth from Mexico with 5000 men in pursuit of Guerrero, hidden in the sierras of the south. His acute intelligence informed him how events were tending, and he saw that eventually Mexico must gain her freedom. He resolved to cast his fortunes with the *party of the future*, rather than with that of the *past.*

In January, 1821, instead of engaging with the patriot chief, Guerrero, in deadly conflict, he invited him to an amicable meeting.

[A. D. 1821.] On the 24th of February of the same year he proclaimed the celebrated "Plan of Iguala" — so named from the town in which it was first conceived — the principles of which were, Union, civil and religious liberty. He joined forces with Guerrero, that great chief granting him the supreme command, and their combined armies marched upon the capital. The skilfully-constructed proclamation, which, while it assured every man his liberty, and declared independence of Spain and all other nations, still professed a conditional loyalty to the mother country, was calculated to stir every heart. The whole country responded, and men rose everywhere to swell the ranks of the "Army of the Three Guarantees" — RELIGION, UNION, AND INDEPENDENCE.

They entered the capital in triumph and without bloodshed, on the 27th of September, 1821, sixteen thousand strong, amidst universal rejoicing, and beneath the tricolored banner, symbolizing the three important principles of the proclamation — UNION, RELIGION, AND INDEPENDENCE!

While preparing to enter the capital, Iturbide learned that another viceroy had been sent by Spain, Don Juan O'Donoju, the *sixty-fourth* royal representative, and the *last.* As only the fortress of San Juan de Ulua remained in Spanish possession, the viceroy was compelled to recognize, provisionally, the Plan of Iguala, and the virtual independence of Mexico. A provisional government was formed, and a regency appointed, consisting of Iturbide, O'Donoju, Don Manuel de la Barcena, Isidro Yañez, and Velasquez de Leon.

The Mexican Empire now extended from Texas to Guatemala, and included the Californias and New Mexico. It is said that, with the exception of China and Russia, it was then the most extensive in the world.

[A. D. 1822.] Another Congress was assembled in February; but it seems that the people were not yet ready for a republican form of government. On the night of the 18th of March, 1822, a sergeant of a regiment collected a disorderly mob, and proclaimed Iturbide *emperor*, and on the 21st of June he was solemnly crowned in the cathedral taking the title of AUGUSTIN I. His arbitrary conduct soon alienated the people, and by dissolving the Congress and instituting another more in accord with his despotic views, he brought upon himself the enmity of his old companions-in-arms. It is at this period that we first hear of SANTA ANNA, who was such a conspicuous character in the subsequent war with the United States, and who was then Governor of Vera Cruz. He at once declared against the emperor, and issued a *pronunciamiento* — or declaration — in favor of a Republic. All the old revolutionary chiefs joined with him, and Iturbide, seeing how useless it would be to resist, at once offered his abdication. He was

allowed to leave the country, being provided with a vessel to Italy, and allowed an annuity of twenty-five thousand dollars in consideration of his distinguished services.

This was in March; his reign had been brief, lasting only nine months. In July of the following year the exiled emperor imprudently ventured to return to Mexico, but had hardly set foot on his native soil when he was arrested, hastily tried, and sentenced to be shot. Thus fell another martyr to Mexican independence, one who had done more than any other man towards the final severance from despotic Spain. Thus miserably perished the first Mexican emperor since the great Guatemotzin.

Congress was hastily assembled upon the expulsion of Iturbide, and placed the government in the hands of an executive power, composed of Generals Bravo, Victoria, and Negretti. In October, 1824, a Federal constitution was adopted, which was mainly modelled after that of the United States, though it declared the Roman Catholic religion to be that of the Republic, and forbade the exercise of any other.

CHAPTER XXX.

MEXICO STILL STRUGGLING.

[A. D. 1825.] The first President of Mexico was General Guadalupe Victoria, a staunch old patriot, an uncompromising enemy to Spain. He had early joined the revolutionists, making his headquarters among the mountains of Vera Cruz, whence he sallied with his guerillas to attack the Spanish supply trains on their way from coast to capital. Finally, he became so annoying, that a large force was concentrated upon his little band. Deserted by all his men, he fled to the fastnesses of the hills, taking only his sword and a little food. For *thirty months* this incorruptible patriot wandered in the forests, and when an Indian finally found him and guided him to a village, with the welcome news that his party had triumphed, he was worn to a skeleton, and covered with hair like a beast. He was the idol of the people, a stern defender of and believer in a Republic, and he was the first to resent Iturbide's usurpation of power. But the Mexicans were not yet prepared for a Republic; they had been too long accustomed to look abroad for a ruler; they had been too long ruled to be able at once to take the reins of government into their own hands. Without sufficient education to recognize the abilities of the statesman, they instinctively looked to a military leader to guide them. From that period of Mexican history to the present, *military prestige* has been necessary to success in Mexican politics!

Though freed from the tyranny of Spain, Mexico soon

became embroiled in domestic quarrels that threatened the overthrow of the government her people had fought so hard to elevate. Three parties at first contended for power: the Bourbonists in favor of a constitutional monarchy, with Ferdinand, the King of Spain, at its head; the Republicans, in favor of a federal republic; and another party desiring a monarchy with a native emperor, or a central government ruled over by a dictator. This was the origin of their quarrels; and in later years (even up to a very recent period) we shall see that the troubles of Mexico were nearly all owing to the efforts made by unscrupulous military chieftains to attain to supreme control.

The fortress of San Juan de Ulua, which had held out until this time, was surrendered by the Spaniards in November, 1825. In December, 1827, the law of expulsion was passed against the Spaniards, and symptoms of discontent were beginning to be manifested by leaders of insurgent bands throughout the country.

[A. D. 1828.] The principal event of the last year of Victoria's presidency was the terrible revolt known as the *pronunciamiento* of the Acordada. Don Manuel Pedraza was declared by a majority of the members of Congress to be the next president; but this did not satisfy the *creole*, or native, party, which was in favor of Guerrero. Santa Anna "pronounced" against him, and marched upon the capital with his troops. A mob secured control of the city, and robbery and murder was carried on for days unchecked, the fury of the rebels being principally directed upon the Spaniards.

The party of Guerrero triumphed, and in January, 1829, Congress declared him elected president. During this year, 1828, the independence of Mexico was recognized by the United States, and a treaty of peace and commerce was contracted with England. This same year, also, an



SCENE IN TEXAS.

event occurred which may be said to have been the beginning of that bloody war that subsequently broke out between the United States and Mexico. Three hundred families, under the leadership of Austin, settled in Texas, then a territory of Mexico.

[A. D. 1829.] A law was passed suppressing African slavery in 1829, under Guerrero, though in a certain sense the Indians have continued, under a system of *peonage*, the slaves of the great landed proprietors to the present day.

In July of 1829 a Spanish squadron from Havana landed troops at Tampico, with the hope of being able to excite their old subjects to arms and recover the country for Spain. But they were defeated in battle by Santa Anna in September, and re-embarked for Havana, with such Spaniards as had been expelled from the country. The vice-president, Bustamente, being in command of a force at Jalapa, intrigued with Santa Anna for the possession of supreme power, and "pronounced" against the president, Guerrero. At the head of troops, Guerrero left the capital to punish the traitor; but his star had commenced its downward journey to the horizon. Bustamente entered the capital in triumph, and Guerrero, after a succession of reverses, was taken prisoner, and *condemned to be shot* for taking up arms against the government, of which he had been recognized as the legitimate head. It was thus that distracted Mexico rewarded her heroes! This war-worn patriot, who had given the best years of his life for his country, was foully murdered by the representatives of the government, in the persons of the villain, Bustamente, and the arch-traitor, Santa Anna!

Bustamente did not remain long in power, for the fickle Santa Anna, who had *his* eyes constantly on the presidential, or dictatorial, chair, issued a *pronunciamiento* against him, and in favor of the banished Paredes, who

was recalled, in 1832, to serve out the few months of his unexpired term.

[A. D. 1833.] Santa Anna retired to his estate, near Vera Cruz, but was soon called from his retirement to occupy the long-coveted position of chief ruler, placing himself at the head of a so-called liberal party.

This remarkable Mexican was born at Jalapa in 1798, had passed nearly all his life in the army, and was at this time one of the foremost in intrigue as well as indomitable in conflict. Complications ensued with the church, which we will not pause to narrate here, and Santa Anna, after betraying his desire to assume dictatorial powers, again retired to his estate in Vera Cruz. He was a keen politician and student of events, and he left it to his vice-presidents, the celebrated Farias and Barragan, to bear the odium of certain unpopular acts.



SANTA ANNA.

[A. D. 1835.] The cloud of war began to settle over the territory of Texas, where the first fighting between American colonists and Mexicans occurred in October, 1835. In December, San Antonio was taken by the Texan general, Houston, and it was to avenge the loss of his troops that Santa Anna gathered over 7000 men and marched for the late scene of conflict. The massacre of the Alamo followed, by which an entire garrison was put to the sword by the order of Santa Anna, who deserves execration for this event alone, had he no other terrible sins to answer for at the bar of God. He later murdered in cold blood a body of Texans who had surrendered to him in good faith, and added another blot to those which already tarnished his fame as a soldier. Defeat soon

followed, and he was captured in April, 1836, with the greater portion of his men. The Americans did not retaliate upon him for his atrocities, but set him at liberty in the following year, when, after visiting the President of the United States, he returned to Mexico.

Texas was now lost to Mexico, mainly through her own folly in maintaining civil strife within her borders. Santa Anna returned in disgrace to Vera Cruz, where for a while he hid his hateful presence from the people; but in 1838, during a political revolt, he placed himself at the head of an army, crushed the rebellion, and shot the leader, the brave Mexia.

[A. D. 1838.] In the winter of that year Mexico was threatened from abroad, a French fleet appearing at Vera Cruz to demand satisfaction for the ill-treatment of subjects of that nation, and the payment of long-standing claims. In repelling an attack made on the city by the invaders, Santa Anna, bravely fighting, lost a leg. This circumstance at once raised him to the place of hero in the estimation of the people, and his popularity knew no bounds. The French soon captured the city and castle, and only withdrew from Mexican shores when they had enforced their claims.

Bustamente was again president during this period, which was one of the stormiest in the history of the infant Republic. Revolts appeared in every portion of the country, the most serious of which was that of Yucatan, which province for a while maintained her independence, and even treated with Texas for aid.

[A. D. 1840.] *Pronunciamentos* were now the order of the hour. In July, 1840, the capital itself became the scene of conflict between different parties, the rebels even shelling the city, and involving in the destruction of their dwellings unarmed citizens and innocent women and

children. Death and destruction stalked hand in hand over the bloody plains of Anahuac.

> "*A war fit for Cain to be the leader of—*
> *An abhorred, a cursed, a fraternal war.*"

With what grim satisfaction must the Indian and the Spaniard have witnessed this fratricidal conflict upon the soil that had alternately belonged to their respective ancestors!

The revolutionary spirit had so affected the military class that the intervals of peace scarcely endured for a month, or even for a week. In 1841 these *pronunciamientos* culminated in a great revolution, which again placed the wily Santa Anna in the executive chair at the head of a powerful central government. This *coup d'état* was known as the "Plan of Tacubaya." Bustamente retired from power and left the country.

[A. D. 1843.] In place of Congress there was assembled a "Junta of notables," who created a central constitution under the name of the "Bases of Organization." Santa Anna, though not always visible at the head of government, was invested with dictatorial powers. An interval of domestic peace revived in him the desire of reconquering Texas, but owing to quarrels about the amount of money necessary to be appropriated, a decision was never reached.

In November, 1844, General Paredes *pronounced* against Santa Anna and his government, and in this revolt so great a number of rebels joined that the unfortunate usurper was defeated at Puebla and made prisoner. He was confined in the Castle of Perote under charge of treason, but finally escaped, under a general amnesty for political offenders, and departed from Mexico on the 29th of May, 1845, for Havana in Cuba.

Freed from this turbulent man, this seditious conspirator

against the public peace, the country should have enjoyed a short period of tranquillity; but this was not to be. The seeds of disturbance had been deeply sown, the legitimate harvest was to follow.

In 1821 the Mexican government had granted to a citizen of the United States, Moses Austin, permission to colonize a portion of Texas, and in 1824 foreigners generally were invited into that State by laws specially enacted for the purpose. This immigrant element was the cause of great jealousy on the part of native citizens, and in 1830 military posts were established all over the territory by the Mexicans, greatly to the annoyance of the industrious, prosperous citizens. They took no part in the partisan revolutions which so constantly agitated the central portion of the Republic, but in 1832, jealous of the centralization of Mexican power as against the rights of States, rose in arms against the scattered Mexican garrisons. In common with other Mexican States, in 1835, they resisted the despotic overthrow of the Federal constitution of 1824 by the centralists of the capital. More fortunate than their sister States, they succeeded in maintaining their position. Mexican hold on the territory of Texas was finally loosened, at San Jacinto, in April, 1836, and, though it subsequently made feeble efforts to regain its lost domain, it never succeeded. For seven years Texas maintained herself in a position of independence, recognized by the United States and other powers, until, finally, she was admitted by our Republic into the great sisterhood of States.

The details of her gallant struggle for freedom belong more particularly to the history of our own country. We have to do now only with the events that led up to the final outbreak of war between Mexico and the United States. We have not far to seek for the causes. An ill-governed province of Mexico declares, and maintains itself, inde-

pendent, desires annexation to the United States, and is finally admitted; not in haste, but after due deliberation. The Mexican minister at Washington declares it "an act of aggression, the most unjust to be found in the annals of history," demands his passports, and leaves the country.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, the wise and liberal Herrera (during whose administration these events occurred) is ejected from power by the rebel General Paredes, who is for war to the knife. Thus ends the year 1845.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES.

[A. D. 1846.] "We believe," says that gifted writer on ancient and modern Mexico, Brantz Mayer, "that our nation and its rulers earnestly desired honorable peace, though they did not shun the alternative of war. It was impossible to permit a conterminous neighbor who owed us large sums of money, and was hostile to the newly-adopted State, to select unopposed her mode and moment of attack. Mexico would neither resign her pretensions upon Texas, negotiate, receive our minister of war, nor remain at peace. She would neither declare war, nor cultivate friendship, and the result was, that when the armies approached each other, but little time was lost in resorting to the cannon and the sword."

In January, 1846, General Zachary Taylor (who became, subsequently, President of the United States) was ordered to move with his men to the mouth of the Rio Grande, where he commenced fortifications opposite the Mexican city of Matamoros.

The first decided act of hostility was a skirmish with *rancheros*, and on the 24th of April Colonel Thornton, with sixty-three dragoons, fell into an ambuscade and was obliged to surrender, after his little band had lost sixteen killed and wounded. *Palo Alto* was the point at which the first actual engagement between the rival forces took place, between Point Isabel, General Taylor's base of supplies, and Matamoros. The Mexicans, 6,000 strong, under

General Arista, opposed the passage of the Americans, about 2,300 in number. After a stubborn fight the former withdrew, with a loss of about one hundred. This was on the 8th of May; on the ninth the fighting was renewed at the ravine of *Resaca de la Palma*, three miles north of



Matamoros. After but a short engagement, though the Mexicans outnumbered the Americans three to one, the latter were routed and retreated across the Rio Grande. Our garrison at the fort — since called Fort Brown, in honor of its commander, who was slain at that time — was

relieved, and on the 18th of May General Taylor crossed the Rio Grande and occupied Matamoros. He had now, indeed, crossed the Rubicon. There was no retreating, to advance was perilous, for the invaded country (disorganized as it was) was hurrying troops to the rescue of its northern provinces. He had been instructed to act with caution, to commit no act of aggression, but to protect Texas effectually from invasion. Spreading his army along the Mexican bank of the Rio Grande, General Taylor leisurely advanced from this extended base of operations, at the same time setting every energy in motion to recruit forces, and to arm, equip, and provision an army sufficient for defence. By September he had advanced as far as the neighborhood of Monterey, the capital of the State of New Leon. This was the key to the northern provinces. In this important fastness the Mexican General, Ampudia, had collected an army of 10,000 men, and awaited attack, expecting to annihilate the bold invaders. The city of Monterey is the oldest in the northern portion of Mexico, having been founded in 1590. Lying in the centre of a fertile plateau, 1,600 feet above the sea, surrounded with groves and gardens, it is a well-built city of stone, with large and handsome public buildings.

The American army appeared before this strongly fortified place 6,500 strong, and on the 21st of September commenced the assault. On the 22d a commanding position, called the Bishop's Palace, was carried by storm by General Worth, and the next day the city was taken. From house to house and from street to street, our brave soldiers fought their way, carrying on a deadly, hand-to-hand conflict with the enemy, who assailed them also from housetops and terraces, until the great central square was reached, and Monterey was theirs! Owing to the small numbers of the attacking party, General Ampudia was

allowed to capitulate with conditions that permitted him to withdraw his forces intact. The first great battle had now been fought; seven thousand Americans, without heavy guns, had defeated nearly ten thousand Mexicans in their own chosen stronghold, and defended by forty pieces of artillery.

"MONTEREY."

"We were not many, — we who stood
Before the iron sleet that day;
Yet many a gallant spirit would
Give half his years if but he could
Have been with us at Monterey.

Now here, now there, the shot it hailed
In deadly drifts of fiery spray,
Yet not a single soldier quailed
When wounded comrades round them wailed
Their dying shout at Monterey.

And on, still on, our column kept,
Through walls of flame its withering way;
Where fell the dead the living stept,
Still charging on the guns which swept
The slippery streets of Monterey.

The foe himself recoiled aghast,
When, striking where he strongest lay,
We swooped his flanking batteries past,
And, braving full their murderous blast,
Stormed home the towers of Monterey.

Our banners on those turrets wave,
And there our evening bugles play;
Where orange-boughs above their grave
Keep green the memory of the brave
Who fought and fell at Monterey.

We are not many, — we who pressed
Beside the brave who fell that day;
But who of us has not confessed
He'd rather share their warrior rest
Than not have been at Monterey?"



BATTLE OF MONTEREY.

The note of alarm was sounded throughout the United States at the first tidings of bloodshed on the Rio Grande. Congress, then in session, immediately voted ten millions of dollars to carry on the war, and ordered the raising of fifty thousand volunteers. The whole country, especially the Southern States, quickly responded, and soon regiments and battalions were hurrying forward to the scene of conflict. Owing to the almost incredible exertions of the veteran General Wool, three large bodies of troops were soon in motion towards the southwest. An ARMY OF THE WEST was placed under the command of the brave Indian fighter, Kearney, to march westward upon New Mexico and then cross to California. The ARMY OF THE CENTRE, under General Wool, was to invade the more northern provinces, and then finally join the ARMY OF OCCUPATION, under General Taylor.

The brave Kearney, with 1,600 men, left Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri, the 30th of June, and, after a severe march of nearly nine hundred miles, captured Santa Fé, capital of New Mexico, without a blow being struck in defence. Possession was thus obtained, and has ever since been held, of those northern territories of Mexico which have since yielded us such vast stores of gold and silver. After organizing a new government, Kearney pushed on, through the almost trackless wilderness, for California. Meanwhile, in that far-distant province of Mexico, the drama of independent war had been enacted with vigor. On the 14th of June the few Americans who had straggled into that country banded together and took Sonora, and on the 25th they were joined by the intrepid Fremont, who was doing topographical work for government in that territory. July 5, raising an independent flag, the patriots declared their independence of Mexico. On July 8 Commander Montgomery of the American navy took possession

of San Francisco, and on August 13th Fremont and Stockton captured Los Angeles. The first news of actual war between Mexico and the United States reached this isolated band of Americans on the 7th of July, when they also learned that Commodore Sloat had raised our flag at Monterey.

Kearney, with his small band of troopers, entered California in December, worn and wasted by their long and fatiguing march. They were soon attacked by the native Californian cavalry, and he lost twenty or thirty men at a place called San Pascual; but they succeeded in reaching the American camp by the middle of the month.

By the last of December, 1846, the American party, after enduring privations and trials of great magnitude, had obtained possession of the greater portion of Upper California, and by the middle of January, 1847, had subjugated this valuable Mexican province, which, a year or two later, opened to the world its subterranean treasure of gold.

The Navajo Indians, who threatened an outbreak, were quelled by a force of Missourians under Colonel Doniphan, who subsequently marched southward into the State of Chihuahua, where, after several engagements, he entered the capital, the large and substantial city of the same name. Then, after a rest of several weeks, he set his troop in motion for the headquarters of General Taylor, which he reached in the spring of 1847, having accomplished a toilsome journey of over five hundred miles, and traversed nearly all the frontier states of Mexico.

In the latter months of 1846 an expedition was planned by the War Department of the United States that was destined to strike at the very heart of the Mexican nation. Under General Scott (whose valuable services are too well-known to need recapitulation here) proceedings went actively forward for an invasion of Mexico by the port of

Vera Cruz, whence it was determined to march direct upon the capital. Our squadrons were already blockading the eastern and western ports, our armies (as we have already seen) had successfully invaded the northern states and provinces. The fatal blow was to be aimed at the central power of the Republic.

Our forces were in great strength in the valley of the Rio Grande, under such able generals as Taylor, Butler, Quitman, Worth, Patterson, and Pillow, but the demands of General Scott, which withdrew the greatest number to a different region, weakened General Taylor's command at a moment most critical. Though successively beaten at every point of attack, the Mexicans had promptly rallied after each encounter. Fresh hordes were pouring down upon the little American army, now so reduced by the levies of the imperious Scott as to be compelled to assume only the defensive. By the end of December a force of twenty thousand men had assembled at San Luis Potosi, south of Monterey, and the centre of one of the richest mining regions of the country, under the command of General Santa Anna.

This irrepressible revolutionist, whom we have seen suffer defeat after defeat, and finally exiled to Cuba, had returned to his native land under peculiar circumstances. Believing that his presence in Mexico would aid the forming of a speedy peace, the Government of the United States had given orders to the blockading squadron off Vera Cruz to permit the returning exile to land in peace. He had no sooner done so than he issued a manifesto, proclaiming to the people that he had radically changed his views, and no longer believed in a central government, to the exclusion of the outside states, and recommended the adoption of the liberal constitution of 1824. When he arrived at the capital, on the 15th of September, the people hailed

him with frantic demonstrations of joy. There was, indeed, no man to whom they could turn to deliver them from the northern invaders as to Santa Anna. They thought they saw in him their savior and their liberator. With characteristic energy, he immediately commenced organizing the bands of recruits that poured in upon him from every quarter. The people, for a short time, seemed united, but their rulers were not; they still thirsted for power, they were divided into bitter factions. While the enemy was pounding at their gates these foolish demagogues wasted precious time in quarrelling

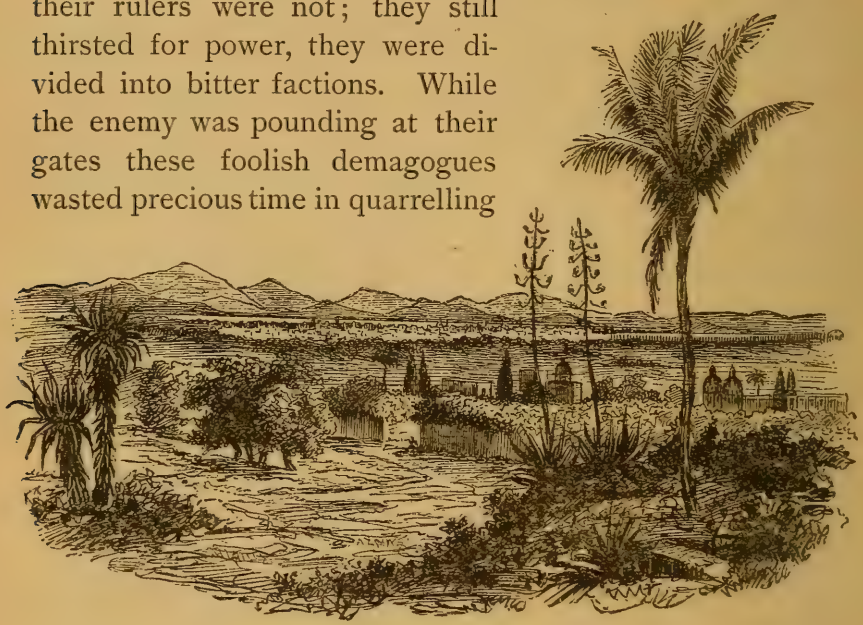


TABLE-LAND OF MEXICO.

over a vanishing power! At last the hero of many *pronunciamentos* posted off towards the field of action, to the north. He reached San Luis Potosi, and organized an army of twenty thousand men. But his efforts were for a while paralyzed by the quarrels of the foolish factions; he merely stood at bay. At last, however, his observant eye noted the decimated ranks of his opponent, and he resolved upon action.

BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.

[A. D. 1847.] About ninety miles southwest of Monterey is the little hamlet of Buena Vista, now famous for the important and decisive battle fought there between the forces of General Taylor and Santa Anna. Becoming aware that a movement of importance was about to be made against him by the enemy, General Taylor withdrew his forces to a strong natural position in the pass of Angostura. On the 22d of February his pickets were driven in and skirmishing ensued. On the 23d an attack was made in force, and a most desperate and sanguinary battle followed. The command of General Taylor was scant five thousand strong, while the force of Santa Anna was full four times that number. But numerical superiority on the part of the enemy was balanced by the strength of the American position — a small plateau surrounded by almost inaccessible hills, and further defended by impassable ravines and barrancas. Santa Anna's large army, by being obliged to concentrate in the gorge, could not make available one half its strength, and as it poured through the narrow defiles its ranks were swept by the murderous fire of artillery. Desperate efforts were made by the Mexicans to break the American line of defence; again and again they valiantly charged up to the guns. But all in vain. The wisdom and sagacity of the leader that had chosen this strong natural position, and the valor of his soldiers, were more than a match for the fiercest charges of the furious foe. Once they almost succeeded in turning our flank, but at the appearance of the brave Taylor himself at the opportune moment, the advance was checked and our flying troops halted. Night fell upon the scene of conflict with the bloody struggle still going on; but under cover of its darkness the Mexicans effected a retreat. The field

was covered with the slain, the Americans losing 750 men and the Mexicans about 2,000.

With the remains of his shattered army the unfortunate Santa Anna retreated to San Luis Potosi; but though defeated he was not dispirited, and by his pompous bulletins he almost made the Mexicans believe that they had won and the Americans had lost. This was, as yet, the most decisive battle of the war; it forever crushed the power of Mexico in the northern provinces.

But though our gallant soldiers had gained a mighty victory they were not permitted to advance and occupy the country, but were compelled to remain idle, while the forces of Scott were marching on to final triumph. Santa Anna reached San Luis Potosi with but half his army remaining, and this force in a thoroughly demoralized condition. He had no time for rest, for the enemy was already at Vera Cruz, and he must turn upon a new army of the dreaded North Americans. He dispatched a portion of his troops in that direction, and hastened to the capital. There all was strife. For a month the idiotic men in power had been wasting their energies and the energies of the nation in senseless contentions. Santa Anna calmed the tumults, and impressed the combatants with the necessity of rousing themselves to meet a foreign foe. Unprincipled and unscrupulous as was this man, Santa Anna, he was unquestionably the animating spirit of the defence. The troubles in the capital had arisen from acts of the *Puros*, or the advanced party, in trying to induce the church



GENERAL SCOTT.

to part with a portion of its large revenue in aid of the defenders of the nation. True to its principles, it had refused, and its adherents had precipitated the capital into the midst of civil strife.

We will not confuse the memory with the names of ambitious men who were temporarily in power at this period, since none of them attained to more than local celebrity. Six changes occurred in the executive alone during the year 1847. It is a wonder that the people knew on which side they were fighting. Few, in reality, did know; and many welcomed the coming of the North Americans as a relief from the perils of civil war.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE MARCH UPON THE CAPITAL.

[A. D. 1847.] From a fleet of one hundred and sixty-three transports, on the 9th of March, General Scott landed his army of twelve thousand men, just below the historic city of Vera Cruz. On the 18th he summoned the city to surrender, having placed his batteries in position, and upon its refusal opened upon it a heavy cannonade from shore and from the ships in the harbor. For eight days the heroic defenders of Vera Cruz withstood the siege, but at last the terrific fire of shot and shell compelled them to capitulate. Scott and his army marched in and took possession, on the 26th of March. Six thousand shot and shell had been thrown into the devoted city, many buildings were destroyed, and one thousand lives were lost. The famous fortress of San Juan de Ulua, built on the island where the Spaniards first landed in 1517, fell with the city.

It is a pestilential spot, this city of Vera Cruz, where fevers rage and hurricanes blow fiercely half the year. The yellow fever, the dreaded *vomito*, carries off its thousand victims yearly. General Scott did not care to remain long in such a plague-stricken locality, and, owing to the completeness of his magnificent preparations, he was enabled soon to leave the coast and march towards the highlands. Three centuries and a quarter before, Hernando Cortez had commenced his march towards the Aztec capital, an invader, like these Americans, but bent upon murder and

pillage, while these sought only justice and reparation for deep offences.

The Mexican nation made one more effort through her indomitable president for concerted action. Santa Anna frantically appealed to them to forget all domestic differ-



MAP SHOWING SEAT OF OPERATIONS.

ences and unite against a common foe. "Though chance," he proclaimed, "may decree the fall of the capital of the Aztec empire under the power of the proud American host, yet the *Nation* shall not perish!"

By the middle of April Scott had left behind him the hot

and unhealthy lowlands — the *tierras calientes* — and was about entering the hills. It was where the table-lands abruptly end above the hot, low plains, where a river forces itself through deep chasms, where deep ravines and barrancas seam the mountains, and the road winds through a narrow defile hewn out of the mountain sides, that the American general found his path obstructed. The Mexicans had fortified the naturally strong position of Cerro Gordo. They had erected breastworks, fortified the ridges and hill-tops, and planted batteries. The position was considered impregnable — a deep rocky ravine protected one side, and on the other was the steep and inaccessible mountain. The top of Cerro Gordo bristled with cannon, which were trained so that they could sweep the road, for a mile of its length, with a fire before which no command could stand. General Scott soon saw that a direct approach would expose his army to a fatal cannonade, and so contrived to flank the battery, while demonstrations were made in front and on either side. The division of General Twiggs stormed and carried the centre of Cerro Gordo, while the brigades of Shields and Riley charged furiously upon the main fort and batteries, causing the Mexicans to fly in utter rout, and turned upon them the guns of their own fortifications.

The loss of the enemy was not less than a thousand, while ours was something over four hundred. Three thousand prisoners, including two hundred and eighty officers and five generals, fell into our hands, besides five thousand stand of arms and forty-three pieces of artillery. The whole American force amounted to eight thousand five hundred. General Santa Anna escaped with great difficulty, leaving his wooden leg on the field in the hurry and confusion of his departure.

Our forces immediately pushed on and occupied Jalapa


Map
OF
MEXICAN VALLEY
SHOWING ROUTE
OF
U. S. ARMY.
LAKE ZUMPANGO
LAKE ZALTOCAN
LAKE SAN CHRISTOBAL
TEZCOCO
LAKE TEZCOCO
GUADALUPE
AZCAPOZALCO
TACUBA
CHAPULTEPEC
SAN COSME AQUEDUCT
CITY OF MEXICO
MOLINO DEL REY
PIEDAD
PENON
GATE OF SAN ANTONIO
TACUBAYA
CHURUBUSCO
SAN ANGEL
COYOCAN
PEDREGA
CONTRERAS
TLALPAM
LAKE XOCHIMILCO
XOCHIMILCO
LAKE CHALCO
AYOTLA
CHALCO
BUENA VISTA
AZNIVE

and the Castle of Perote, where they captured a large amount of arms and artillery. Pursuing their march over the great plateau a portion of the army under General Worth captured, on the 22d of May, the large and important city of Puebla, a city containing, to-day, 70,000 inhabitants, and celebrated for the number of its churches, convents, and cotton mills.

Santa Anna, the irrepressible, again gathered a small army and opposed the march of Worth, but was obliged to retire with loss. The Congress and the politicians passed valuable time in squabbles amongst themselves, instead of rallying the people as a unit to repel the advancing enemy. But the courage of the nation was not broken, and, unfortunate as he had been, the people still looked to Santa Anna to yet lead them to victory. While they were passing their time in dissensions, General Scott had gradually quartered all his forces in Puebla, whence he sent fruitless missions to negotiate for peace.

An army of twenty-five or thirty thousand Mexicans was soon gathered in the threatened capital. As soon as it was found that General Taylor would not advance farther southward, the army of General Valencia, which had opposed him, was withdrawn to Mexico, while from the south came General Alvarez with a large body of Pinto Indians. Both coasts were now in our possession, and merchandise passing in and out of the country as in times of peace, only a slight duty being retained by our commander for the maintenance of the war.

[A. D. 1847.] On the 7th of August General Scott left Puebla, and pushed on towards the city of Mexico with ten thousand enthusiastic soldiers. They surmounted the mountain barriers that hemmed the lovely valley in from the world outside, and finally looked upon the city they were soon to conquer. Three hundred and twenty-eight

years before, also in the month of August, the army of Cortez had climbed those very hills, and had turned their gloating gaze upon the Aztec capital. On the 11th of August the troops were concentrated in the valley, near Ayotla and the ancient town of Chalco.

If you will examine the map you will not fail to observe what a commanding position the American general had taken. Four routes diverged from this point and led to the city. The most direct was that passing the southern border of Lake Tezcoco and entering the city at the gate of San Lazaro. To-day a railroad traverses that same great causeway, and runs past Chalco and Amecameca down into the western lowlands. Another road led by the way of Mexicalcingo, a portion being over the same great causeway down which Cortez and his intrepid soldiers marched so exultingly three centuries before. Both these roads were defended by strong fortifications, the first especially, which was commanded by the isolated hill, *El Penon*, bristling with cannon from base to summit, and swarming with soldiers. A more open, though longer route, lay around Lake Tezcoco to the northward, through the city of Nezahualcoyotl — Tezcoco. Here, in anticipation of a movement in this direction, Santa Anna had stationed Valencia with his troops from the north.

The fourth and last approach was fully as circuitous, skirting the lakes of Chalco and Xochimilco and the bases of the southern and western hills. It was the most rugged and the least known to the American engineers, but was finally chosen by General Scott, who believed it to be, in the end, the most facile approach to the city.

Forts and fortified posts completely enclosed the beleaguered capital. Besides the impregnable position of *El Penon* there were fortifications at and near Guadalupe on the north, while the different gates of the city were



GATE OF ST. ANTONIO, MEXICO.

amply defended. The strongest positions, after El Penon, seem to have been the very ones that General Scott designed first to march against, and these were, at the hacienda of San Antonio, Churubusco, Chapultepec, and Molino del Rey. On the 15th of August the army was set in motion, in four divisions, commanded by Generals Worth, Pillow, Quitman, and Twiggs, in the order named, while General Scott took his position in the centre. The Mexican, Alvarez, attacked them with his Pinto Indians, but they were soon driven away, and on the 18th the entire army entered the town of San Augustin, or Tlalpam, at the base of the south-western hills.

Santa Anna, commanding in the centre of the circle, about the circumference of which General Scott was moving, was able to concentrate his troops at any given point with great facility. Even at this late day, it is with feelings of concern that one views the situation of the American army at this juncture. Surrounded on every side by almost impassable hills and sedgy lakes, far distant from, and with a desperate foe between it and its base of supplies, with an active enemy comprising thirty thousand fighting men to contend with, this little handful of ten thousand men was indeed in a most perilous position. The country was at last aroused and united in the common endeavor to drive the hated invaders from its soil. Every resource was now being drawn upon; church bells were cast into cannon, and the military and religious leaders were using every endeavor to excite their followers to fanatic zeal in behalf of their country and their religion.

Beyond the town of San Augustin was a dreary waste called the *Pédregal*, a rugged lava field, impassable except by a single mule path. Through this the army must march if it would avoid the fortified positions of San Antonio and Churubusco, where Santa Anna had concentrated

troops sufficient to almost overwhelm the Americans by their masses. The first engagement in the valley took place here, at Contreras, on the 19th of August. General Valencia, had, contrary to the orders of Santa Anna, left his position at San Angel and Coyoacan, where he was within easy supporting distance of his commander-in-chief at San Antonio, and thrown up an intrenched camp. At three o'clock on the morning of the 20th the brigade commanded by General Persifer E. Smith advanced upon the enemy's camp. By a gallant and brilliant charge they stormed the intrenchments, and drove the enemy, panic-stricken, from the field. This was considered by General Scott one of the most brilliant feats of arms ever, at that time, recorded in the annals of war. The Mexican loss was seven hundred killed and eight hundred prisoners, besides field-pieces, guns, standards, and ammunition. General Valencia, who commanded this army of the north — considered the best in the field — fled a fugitive to the hills, hiding from the wrath of Santa Anna, who ordered him shot at sight.

There is little doubt that he contributed largely to the American success by his disobedience of the orders of the commander-in-chief, and that the gallant charge of Smith's brigade relieved the penned-up invading forces from a dreadful dilemma. San Antonio was soon taken, and then there only remained the convent at Churubusco. Uniting by different roads, the combined forces swept down upon the fated fortress. It was considered one of the strongest positions in the valley; the massive walls of an old convent being pierced with loop-holes for musketry, and mounted with heavy cannon. Within these walls were gathered the flower of the Mexican defenders, the national guard, besides a band of renegade Irishmen who had deserted from the American ranks, and now fought, with characteristic perfidy, against the soldiers of their adopted country.

These miserable wretches formed a battalion called Saint Patrick's, and very summarily received their deserts after the convent was taken. The convent was taken finally after a most desperate fight, lasting nearly three hours, and after the outworks had been carried at the point of the bayonet, under a tremendous fire, a white flag appeared. Sixteen hundred prisoners were the result of this day's fighting, besides those taken at the *Pédregal.*

The Mexicans had battled nobly in defence of their capital, fighting individually with the fury of despair. But all had been in vain; the last defence between their city and the invading army had been destroyed, their stronghold lay open to direct assault. With shouts of triumph, the exulting Americans pursued the flying foe to the very gates of the city, a detachment of Harney's cavalry even dashing up to the inner walls.

While our army was yet flushed with victory, and eager to enter the undefended city, the prudent general in command ordered a recall. Night was coming on, and, even though the enemy were panic-stricken and demoralized, prudence showed that the hour had not arrived when this small band of eight thousand men should enter a stronghold containing two hundred thousand inhabitants. After the dead had been buried, the wounded cared for, and the spoils secured, the army bivouacked on the plains it had so bravely won. The 21st of August came, and General Scott prepared to take up positions whence he could use his battering-cannon with effect against the city walls. It was then that the enemy requested an armistice, which our commander-in-chief, from motives that must ever redound to his credit, finally granted. The different divisions were quartered in Tacubaya, San Angel, and Mixcoac, villages clustered about that historic city of Coyoacan, whence Cortez, in that memorable siege of

Mexico of 1520, conducted operations against the Aztec defenders. Overtures of peace were made to the Mexicans, which, after they had gained by deliberation important time in which to recuperate and reorganize, were rejected. Considering the great disparity of forces, — that the Mexicans outnumbered the Americans ten to one, — it is not strange that the people of the threatened capital refused to treat for peace so long as defences yet remained. The only unaccountable thing is, that they did not have sufficient courage to unite and sweep them from the face of their country. But they did not, and they must forever bear the stigma of being conquered in their own chosen strongholds by a mere handful of soldiers.

Santa Anna improved every moment of rest that the armistice allowed him in strengthening his position, in raising troops, and in arming the mob of *leperos* that infested the capital. Then he sent answer that the voice of his people was for war, — war to the knife!

Scott was prepared for this, and resolved upon instant action. Three important points of defence yet remained to guard the city; the strongly-fortified castle and hill of Chapultepec; the *Molino del Rey*, or King's Mill — a massive stone building filled with troops, and defended by heavy cannon; and the *Casa Mata* — another building of great strength filled with supplies of war. These points were promptly reconnoitred, and an aggressive movement made on the morning of the 8th. It was a glorious affair, that capture of *Molino del Rey*, and, though many a gallant soldier fell before the cannon of the foe, the massive structure was at length shattered, and the forces within it driven, flying like sheep, before the bayonets of the Americans. The Casa Mata was foolishly stormed, when it should have been battered to pieces by the artillery; and dreadful carnage was made amongst our troops as they ad-

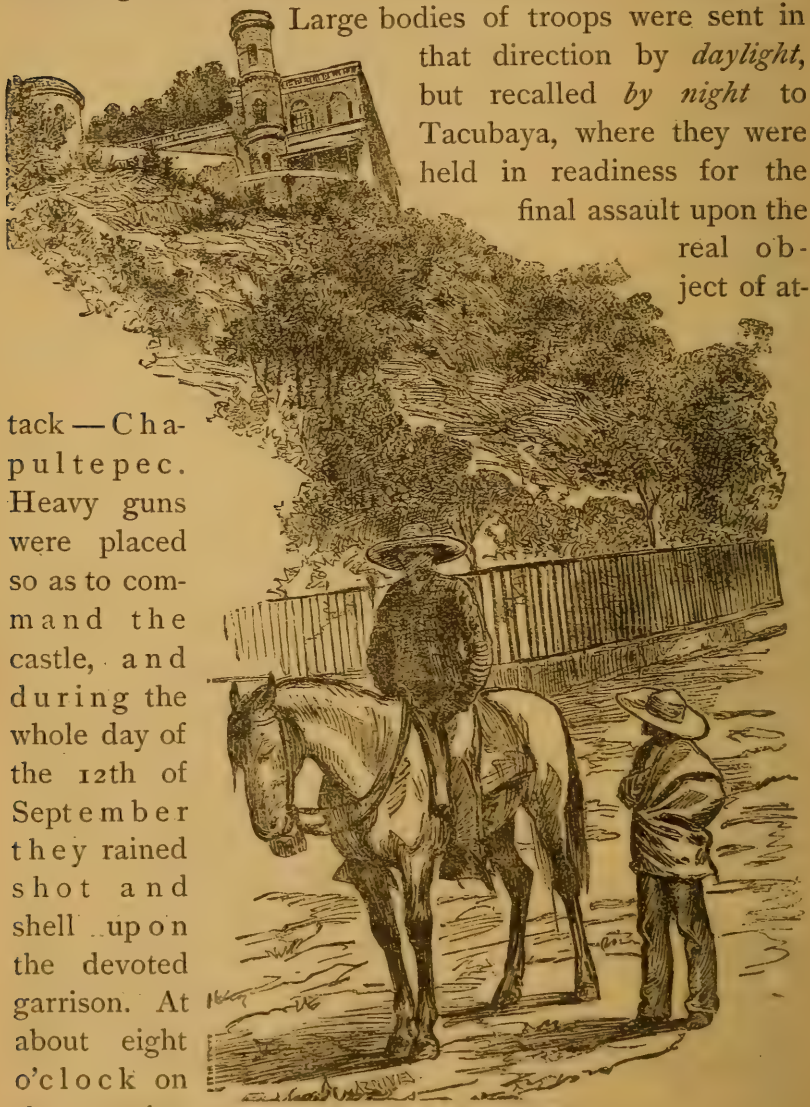


THE VOLCANOES, FROM TACUBAYA.

vanced, time after time, to the assault. But this strong work was finally blown up and destroyed, the Molino demolished, and the foe flying, panic-stricken and demoralized, towards Chapultepec and the city. Eight hundred prisoners were ours, besides cannon, ammunition, and small arms in such quantities as to be superfluous. Again had the Americans gained a victory against superior numbers; for on this day, in this short fight, — which was over by nine o'clock in the morning, — they had whipped and driven in terror before them four times their number of Mexican soldiers. A little over three thousand had defeated twelve thousand in their own chosen places of defence! The American loss was one hundred and sixteen killed and six hundred and sixty-five wounded.

After rendering the spots so recently bristling with cannon unavailable by the enemy as places for defence, the Americans *retired.* Eager, and borne onward by the impulse of victory, there is little doubt that the invincible battalions could have then carried the castle and hill of Chapultepec, which now, of all the fortified posts in that portion of the valley, alone remained. But events justified General Scott in his order for a recall, and showed the subtle strategy by which he discomfited his wily adversary. The storming of Chapultepec was reserved for a purpose! The object in view was not to get into the city merely, but to enter it at its weakest point, and where there were fewest soldiers to defend the gates. Santa Anna, seeing the fall of Chapultepec, would naturally conclude that the attack would be made upon the western gates of the city, — which were nearest to Chapultepec, and reached by direct roads. This, in reality, was the plan of General Scott; but, in order to divert Santa Anna's attention from the real point of attack, it was necessary he should be made to think otherwise. So General Twiggs

was ordered to manœuvre with his troops in front of the *garita*, or gate, of San Antonio, up to which our cavalry had so gallantly charged at the storming of Churubusco. Large bodies of troops were sent in that direction by *daylight*, but recalled *by night* to Tacubaya, where they were held in readiness for the final assault upon the real object of attack — Chapultepec. Heavy guns were placed so as to command the castle, and during the whole day of the 12th of September they rained shot and shell upon the devoted garrison. At about eight o'clock on the morning of the 13th the great guns suddenly ceased, and the assaulting party dashed forward. Rapidly crossing the



CHAPULTEPEC.



MEXICO AT PEACE.

interval between *Molino del Rey* and the hill of Chapultepec, they placed their scaling-ladders against the walls, and poured over the fortifications like a resistless inundation. It was a heroic charge, for they had to clamber up the precipitous hill in the face of a galling fire, unsupported by artillery or friendly guns; and it was heroically resisted by the gallant old revolutionary general, Bravo, and his band of cadets from the military academy. A monument at the base of the steep cliffs of Chapultepec records their deeds and laments their early fall; while another, back of Molino del Rey, commemorates the bloody action there. Still desperately fighting, the routed garrison fled along the causeways of Belen and San Cosme, hotly pursued by the eager Americans.

The castle was ours. From its tower our flag soon floated, above our victorious general and over the defeated Bravo and a thousand prisoners. General Worth led his troops at once down the road of San Cosme, while Quitman charged upon the gate of Belen. Two great aqueducts diverge from Chapultepec, the one going direct to the gate of Belen, about two miles away; the other entering the city at San Cosme, by an indirect course, both bounding two sides of a triangle. Worth wisely halted at the gate of San Cosme, and, planting a mortar and cannon, held the position during the night until the morning of the 14th, when he marched into the city as far as the Alameda. Quitman penetrated the city walls under the very guns of the formidable citadel, and gained and held a position there all night. General Twiggs, at the southern gate, had performed his part with equal gallantry and forbearance, and had so diverted Santa Anna by his annoying fire and feints of assault that he had completely disconcerted that puzzled commander, and made it possible for Worth and Quitman to capture the western gates before the

Mexicans could recover from their surprise and mass their troops to oppose them. The American triumph was now complete. The Mexican leaders, vanquished at every encounter, were now as completely demoralized as their army, and at midnight they retreated with their entire band of followers from the city. The next morning a brilliant cavalcade escorted the victorious commander-in-chief to the great central square, and the American flag was hoisted above the National Palace. Upon the same spot, in the same great plaza that once saw the entry of Cortez and his army, the Americans halted and consummated their triumph. The city had fallen, for the first time to an external foe since it was wrested from Aztec possession by Cortez and his band of Spaniards.

If permitted to indulge in comparisons, we should say that the Americans had accomplished a task of greater difficulty than the Spaniards. Instead of finding a people wholly unacquainted with the use of fire-arms, and even the sight of horses and ships, as did Cortez, they had encountered an active, intelligent foe, equally well equipped and versed in the science of war with themselves, and a country alive throughout its length and breadth with hatred of the invaders. There is no knowing what fate would have befallen our army had the country been united in its efforts under wise and patriotic leaders; but the same causes that contributed to the destruction of the Aztec empire weakened the strength of the Mexican nation, — hatred of the controlling power and universal distrust of its leaders. The fact remains, however, that the army of the United States did, in spite of every danger from forced marches in the rainy season, — the sickliest of the year, — in the face of a vengeful enemy swarming from every hill and valley, overcome patiently every obstacle, and finally plant its victorious banner upon the

capitol of the nation, in the very heart of the excited country.

The visitor to Mexico to-day may see a reminder of this fact in the shape of a monument to our fallen heroes in the American cemetery.

Perhaps a harder task than the capture of the capital was the government of it, after the heads of power had fled and had let loose in their flight the desperate inmates of their prisons. A hideous monster lifted itself into view in a few days in the shape of a mob, which assaulted the victors from roof-tops and churches for the space of two days. This mob was composed mainly of the filthy *leperos*, — the vilest, most degraded wretches that ever infested any portion of the earth. From the earliest days of Mexico, these abandoned villains have existed there, and to-day even they prowl about the streets of the beautiful city.

Martial law was proclaimed, and the city, placed under the protection of American honor, was soon at peace, enjoying a security of life and property that it had never felt under its own chosen government. Santa Anna and his generals had fled to Guadalupe, and thence, reforming their army, marched upon the city of Puebla, and to the attack of the scattered garrisons guarding the American connections with the base of supplies at Vera Cruz.

The garrison at Puebla had been left in command of Colonel Childs, with but four hundred men on duty, and guarding eighteen hundred in the hospitals. For three weeks they were closely besieged by the rising of the masses, and by a force swelled to eight thousand troops on the arrival of Santa Anna. Their condition was most desperate until General Lane, fighting his way all the distance from Vera Cruz against fierce bands of guerillas, came to his assistance. Santa Anna, marching out to

meet him, was defeated on the 9th of October, and on the 13th the gallant garrison was relieved from danger by the pursuit and dispersion of the besiegers. Mexico was yet full of soldiers, which, if collected together, might have been made into a formidable army; but leaders and followers were demoralized, and no successful attempt was made. Bands of guerillas infested the country, — those daring and desperate horsemen who, acting individually or in small bodies, annoyed the army by suddenly swooping out of their places of concealment, murdering and plundering without mercy, and then escaping to their strongholds. These were now pursued relentlessly by the Americans, and their principal haunts broken up, though they for a long time proved a terrible scourge to the line of communication.

The most difficult matter now before the American commander was to conclude a permanent peace. A commissioner, Mr. Nicholas Trist, had been sent out by our government, with full powers to treat with the Mexicans for honorable peace. He had made overtures to them at different times, when they might have accepted them without a sacrifice of national honor; but these they rejected.

Now we were in a position to dictate such terms as we chose; but the difficulty was, *to find a government* with which to treat. The country was ours by right of conquest; but the United States, as a great nation, fully alive to the demands of the enlightened age in which these events were transpiring, forbore from committing any act that would irritate a noble though conquered people. It had been the policy of the commander-in-chief to allow no act of aggression to be committed; personal property had been respected; even the supplies for the army purchased and paid for.

[A.D. 1848.] A government was finally discovered with

which to treat; and on the 2d of February, 1848, a treaty of peace was signed at the sacred town of Guadalupe, three miles from the capital, and on the 30th of May finally ratified. By this treaty the United States acquired the territory of Texas, New Mexico, and Upper California; the boundary lines between the two Republics were regulated and defined; and Mexico received, as indemnity, fifteen millions of dollars, besides which the United States assumed her indebtedness against American citizens, amounting to over three millions more.

The American armies were withdrawn during the summer, and the Mexicans left to the somewhat difficult task of governing themselves.

Santa Anna, who had played the most conspicuous part in the defence of his country, was again an exile, having been allowed to leave the coast in April, with all his treasure and domestic property, for Jamaica. For a while he remained under a cloud; but he soon emerged, and we shall meet him again in the councils of the nation. The American army had accomplished its mission, — it had compelled a haughty and stubborn foe to submit to the demands of reason. In its invasion of the country it had not stooped to plunder, nor had it left behind any record of barbarity. It had marched steadily forward, encountering disease and death unflinchingly, fighting bravely every battle imposed upon it; and from the beginning to the end *every battle had been a victory!* We may well take a natural pride in this army of our fathers, especially as we compare it with the armies of other powers, and we may review with pleasure their moderation in those repeated and overwhelming successes.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ERA OF REFORM.

[A. D. 1848.] For a brief period, after the withdrawal of the American army, the Mexican people drew the breath of peace, disturbed only by outbreaks headed by the turbulent Paredes. The notorious guerilla, Padre Jarato, was made prisoner and shot, and attempts made to destroy those bands of brigands, the guerillas, that had proved so troublesome to the American army, and which were now murdering and despoiling their own countrymen. For many years these murderous cut-throats existed in their mountain fastnesses, rendering all travel in the interior insecure; and even to-day they infest portions of the country, and set all law at defiance.

In June, 1848, Señor Herrera, (who had been in power at the opening of the war with the United States) took possession of the presidential chair.* For the *first time* within the memory of men then living, the supreme power changed hands without disturbance or opposition. The administration of Señor Herrera was conspicuous for its tolerance and its economy. The army — that fruitful source of disturbance — was greatly reduced, arrangements were made with creditors abroad, and for the faithful discharge of internal affairs.

[A. D. 1851.] General Mariano Arista, formerly min-

* "Por primera vez, se vis en México que el poder supremo pasase de unas manos á otras sin violencia y por el ministerio de la ley." — Compendio de la Historia de Mexico.

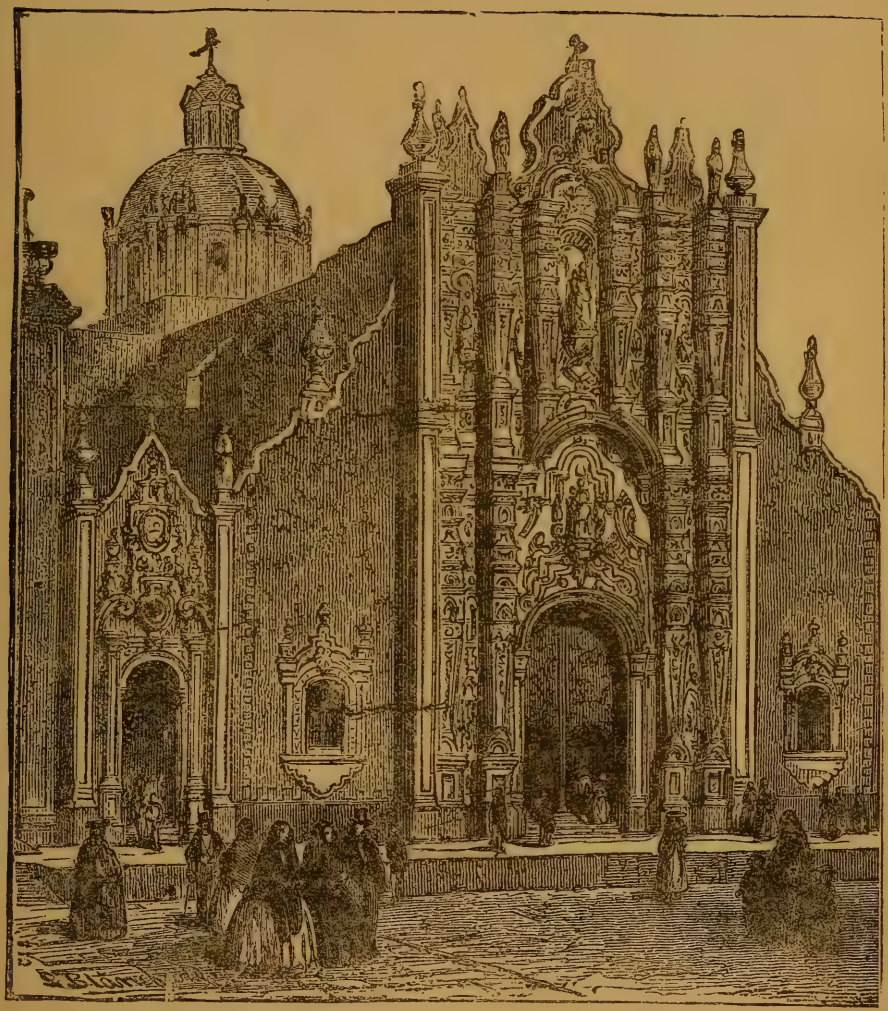
ister of war, assumed peaceful possession of power, in January, 1851, and continued the wise and economical administration of his predecessor. But Mexico could not long remain at peace, even with herself; she was quiet merely because utterly prostrated, and in December, 1852, some military officers, thirsting for power, rebelled against the government. They commenced again the old system of *pronunciamientos;* usually begun by some man in a province distant from the seat of government, and gradually gaining such strength that when finally met by the lawful forces they were beyond control. Rather than plunge his country anew into the horrors of a civil war, General Arista resigned his office and sailed for Europe, where he died in poverty a few years later.

[A. D. 1853.] It may astonish any one except the close student of Mexican history to learn the name of the man next placed in power by the revolutionists, for it was no one else than General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna! Recalled by the successful rebels from his exile in Cuba and South America, Santa Anna hastened to the scene of conflict, sniffing from afar the smoke of battle and gloating over prospective spoil with which to replenish his depleted treasury. Instead of devoting himself to the establishment of law and order, he commenced at once to extend indefinitely the army, and to intrench himself in a position of despotic power, and, in December, 1853, he issued a decree which, in substance, declared him *perpetual dictator.* This aroused opposition all over the country, and the Liberals, who were opposed to an arbitrary centralized government, rose in rebellion. The most successful leaders were Generals Alvarez and Comonfort, who, after repeated victories, drove the arch conspirator from the capital, on the ninth of August, 1855. Santa Anna secretly left the city of Mexico, and a few days later embarked at Vera

Cruz for Havana. During several years he resided in Cuba, St. Thomas, Nassau, and the United States, constantly intriguing for a return to power in Mexico. We have not yet taken a final farewell of this man, who for forty years formed so conspicuous a figure in Mexican politics. Alvarez and Comonfort took possession of the capital, and in October, 1855, the former was elected president. He held this office but a few months, when, owing to the infirmities of age, and seeing symptoms of disaffection in the Liberal party, he resigned in favor of Comonfort, his minister of war. Formidable rebellions soon broke out against this liberal government among the officers of the great army revived by Santa Anna, and one of them at the head of five thousand men took the city of Puebla. Hastily assembling an army of sixteen thousand, Comonfort met the rebels and routed them, in March, 1856, and again in October of the same year. During this time he was only provisional president, but in December, 1857, he was elected constitutional president by a large majority of votes.

[A. D. 1857.] The year 1857 ushered in a period of Mexican history most critical, when the life of the nation hung in a balance. To understand the condition of things at the beginning of this period, and the causes for subsequent actions during the next fifteen years, we must recall some of the leading events since the year 1810, when Hidalgo of Dolores raised the cry of indepenence.

The Mexican revolution as a whole, writes a learned investigator, "involved three great events or proceedings: I. The throwing off of the yoke of Spain, and the maintenance of an independent organic existence. II. The overthrow of the ecclesiastical system *at home*, which, like the pall of Egypt, overshadowed the whole land. III. The construction of a new government on principles in harmony



SAGRARIO, OR PARISH CHURCH, CITY OF MEXICO.

with the 'rights of man,' and the spirit of modern civilization.

"The latter implied a complete reconstruction of society in all the domain of government, of religious institutions, and of the entire fabric of civil, social, and educational life. . . . From 1824 (when the first really National Congress met, and the first Constitution was published) to 1853, the country was rent and torn by a succession of conflicts, in which the distinctive principles of the two great parties were ever uppermost. The Church power was wielded with indefatigable and unscrupulous energy, to baffle the Republicans and stay the progress of constitutional freedom. But its march was irresistible!"

We may trace this determined opposition to the efforts for freedom through a period of over fifty years. It began, perhaps, with the excommunication of Hidalgo and Morelos; and throughout the whole long struggle, ecclesiastical artillery smoked and thundered on the side of oppression and against the defenders of liberty. The most bitter hatred of the Church was evoked in 1846, when the patriot, Gomez Farias, recommended that a loan of fourteen million dollars should be asked of that body, and if refused that it be raised by a sale of Church property. This was at a moment when the very existence of the nation was threatened by an external foe, and when the government was completely impoverished, though the Church possessed "*three hundred millions* of the most valuable property of the nation." The request was refused, and Farias driven in disgrace from power.

Thanks to this refusal of assistance to the Mexican nation in time of sore need, the victories of the Americans were rendered easier; thanks to them, also, are due for the subsequent civil strife, and the intervention of a foreign power and a foreign prince!

The Mexican Church was, according to the highest authorities, the most corrupt on the face of the earth at that time. It was a worthy offshoot of that central force of corruption and despotism ruled over and guided by the Pope at Rome. So long as it seemed to be for its interests to do so, it supported the policy of the King of Spain in his colonial possessions. It could not resist the temptation of becoming absolute mistress of the New World, at the successful revolution of Iturbide, and bent its influence for the time to the cause of Mexico. But as soon as it saw the tendency of the people towards religious, as well as civil freedom, it became a bitter and uncompromising enemy of that people towards acquiring the rights which had been long denied them. From the Pope the priests had long been in possession of special privileges and exemptions. Through them, the vicegerent of Peter issued his *Bulls* for the benefit of their dissolute flock. There were "bulls" that would absolve one from every crime except heresy; bulls that would pass a sinner's soul through purgatory; bulls that would release a thief from the obligation to return stolen goods; and bulls to wash away even the stain of murder! Rich and poor availed themselves of these opportunities for escaping the penalties of crimes, and into the treasury of the Church flowed the wealth of the entire country. Added to these sources of emolument, were *fueros*, or privileges, which secured to the clergy a tithe of everything produced or imported into the country. Evey article of necessity and luxury was taxed for the support of these useless incumbents of cathedrals, churches, and convents. All these, besides the voluntary contributions of the faithful, and the vast estates wrung from death-bed penitents, to escape the pains of purgatory, swelled the accumulations of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico to an almost fabulous amount.



MEXICAN PRIESTS OF THE PAST.

In 1850 it was estimated that the property then held by the Church amounted to a total of from *one-half* to *two-thirds* the entire wealth of the nation!

Including the members of the various conventual establishments, Dominicans, Franciscans, etc., there were, in 1850, seven thousand ecclesiastics supported by the contributions of the people. The cathedrals — notably those of Mexico, Puebla, and Guadalajara, — were ablaze with gold and jewels, the spoils of centuries of oppression of a superstitious people.

Is it a wonder that these long-suffering people groaned loudly under their burdens? Is it strange that, looking at this great parasite settled upon their fair land, — sapping the life-blood of their nation, fattening upon the toil of themselves and their children, — the Mexican people should begin to inquire why it was permitted to exist? For centuries past the Church had strangled inquiry into its doings. By means of fire, and torture, and the Inquisition, it had prevented the crushed and prostrate people from asking questions.

But now, in the years 1856 and 1857, its doom was sealed. It had been foreshadowed in 1846, when Gomez Farias ventured to inquire why it was the Church should not be made to contribute towards the preservation of a nation, the downfall of which would prove its ruin. At that time it became evident to close observers that a champion of the oppressed had arisen. Among those who eloquently advocated the passage of this measure was a young lawyer, named Juarez.

Born of poor parents, in 1806, in a hill town of Oaxaca, Southern Mexico, Benito Juarez lived till he was twelve years of age without being able to read, write, or even speak, the Spanish language. He was a true Mexican, a Zapotec Indian, of unadulterated blood. The

race of Indians to which he belonged, the Zapotecs, had never been wholly conquered by the Spaniards; more than once have these *Indios de las Sierras*, — "Indians of the hills" — marched down into the valleys, and dictated terms to their rulers. It was fit that the future deliverer of Mexico from the thraldom of three centuries should have been born of such stock.

We have not space to dwell upon the career of this remarkable man, but will note that, after having been a



PORTRAIT OF JUAREZ.

member of the city council of Oaxaca, a civil judge, and Secretary of State, he was elected by the people a deputy to the "General Constituent Congress," which met at the capital of the Republic in December, 1846. It was there he showed himself the friend of freedom and the uncompromising enemy to oppression that his later acts proved him to be.

In 1853, in the "Plan of Ayutla" — the announcement of principles for which they fought — Generals Alvarez and Comonfort sounded the death-knell of the Church. In

July, 1855, at great personal peril, Juarez joine the army of Alvarez and marched with him to the capital. He had previously met with harsh treatment, and had even been imprisoned and sent into exile, by Santa Anna, whose overthrow he now saw so triumphantly accomplished.

His history now becomes a part of that of his country, for he was identified with every prominent political movement from this period until his death, in 1872. Alvarez (as we have already seen) was proclaimed President of the Republic in October, 1855, and appointed Juarez his "Minister of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs." The sweeping laws of reform instituted by this enemy to the Church were sanctioned by the constituent Congress, which met in February, 1856, and, after a year's deliberations, adopted the famous "CONSTITUTION of 1857." The first National Congress, in 1812, had declared in their constitution, first, that the Catholic religion *only* should be allowed in the State, and that the press, while "free for all purposes of science and political economy, was not free for the discussion of religious matters." In the forty-five years that had passed since then the people of Mexico had learned a bitter lesson, and resolved to profit by it. The representatives of the people now declared not only the right of everybody to any religion he chose to adopt, but to full and free discussion. The celebrated "Law of Juarez" "abolished the whole system of class legislation, suppressed the military and ecclesiastical *fueros* — the privileged and special tribunals and charters of the army and the clergy — and established, for the first time in Mexico, *equality of the citizens before the law.*"

[A. D. 1858.] Comonfort was not equal to the occasion this crisis in the affair of nations demanded. He turned traitor to his party (the Liberals) and gave the government into the hands of the Church party. On the 17th of Decem-

ber, 1857, General Zuloaga, commanding a brigade in the army, "pronounced" in favor of the Church and *against* the Constitution. He was aided by Comonfort, who, on the 11th of January, 1858, was denounced and abandoned by the very party he had so materially aided, and driven from the country. He later repented of his treason, and returned from Europe during the French invasion, taking arms with the defenders of liberty, and was assassinated by the hirelings of the Church. Zuloaga, in January, proclaimed the "Plan of Tacubaya." The leading principles of this "plan" were in direct opposition to those of the Constitution — to those of Reform. Had the people of Mexico sanctioned them they would have lost all they had gained by fifty years of fighting. The dark cloud of the previous century would again have settled down upon their nation. The *fueros* were to be restored — "under which the military and clergy are responsible only *to their own tribunals*" — the Roman Catholic was to be the only religion tolerated, and immigrants admitted only from Catholic countries; the press was to be subjected to censorship; an "irresponsible central dictatorship, subservient solely to the church," was to be established, looking, if possible, to a *restoration of a monarchy*. Mark these principles! for they give the key to events during the subsequent foreign intervention.

By the flight of Comonfort the presidency devolved upon the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, BENITO JUAREZ. After trying in vain to combat the hydra-headed enemy to freedom, represented by Zuloaga, Miramon and others in command of the army, Juarez and the loyal members of his cabinet hastened to Guanajuato, where they organized the government on the basis of the Constitution of 1857.

THE "WAR OF REFORM."

The party of the "old régime" was not recognized outside the capital, and again we see the States arrayed against a central, dictatorial power. Juarez was promptly recognized as the *president of the people*, and, during the long years of strife that followed, he nobly sustained the trust imposed upon him at their hands. The army was mainly against him, the Church — with all its money and influence — was against him; but *the people*, brushing from their eyes the cobweb of superstition, rallied in increasing numbers about the banner of reform.

At first the national guards were defeated. In March, Juarez and his cabinet were captured and on the point of being shot by a rebel chief; rescued by a noble patriot leader, they retreated to Colima, in great danger all the way. In April Juarez embarked at Colima for Vera Cruz, to reach which port he was obliged to cross the Isthmus of Panama, sail for New Orleans, and thence take passage for the ancient seaport, where he arrived in May.

The "Three Years' War of Reform" lasted from 1858 through 1861. In the year 1860 the people elected Juarez constitutional president by an overwhelming number of votes. In July, 1859, he decreed the "Laws of Reform," by which the property of the Church was confiscated and declared to belong to the nation. The forces on both sides were incited anew to fresh conflict, and many and sanguinary battles ensued. Among the heroes who aided Juarez in the defence of the constitution were: Doblado, Gonzalez Ortega, Santos Degollado, Zaragoza, Arteaga, and many others, equally worthy of mention, but whom space precludes. Against them, in the interests of the Church and oppression, fought Generals Zuloaga, Miramon, Osollo, Robles, Taboada, and Marquez. Death, in the

field, or by the hand of the assassin or executioner, has taken most of these men away.

The decisive battle between the contending parties was that of Calpulalpam, December 25, 1860, subsequent to which the Liberal army entered and took possession of the capital, followed (January 11, 1861,) by Juarez and his cabinet, amid great rejoicings.

His election, and the popular endorsement of his policy, had been by overwhelming majorities, and as soon as he found himself within the capital he set himself at once to promote the welfare of the long-suffering people. But no time was allowed the harassed Republic for rest, for that insane fratricidal strife had attracted the attention of the outside world; the leading powers of Europe had united against poor Mexico, and their fleets were even then headed towards its coasts.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE FRENCH INTERVENTION.
(1861–1867.)

[A. D. 1861.] For full forty years had Mexico been convulsed with internal feuds, and during this long period she had passed through *thirty-six* different forms of government and under *seventy-three* rulers. Such a series of unparalleled revolutions and changes of administration could not but attract the attention of all the world. As early as April, 1861, Secretary Seward, of the United States government, wrote to Mr. Corwin, our minister at Mexico: "For a few years past the condition of Mexico has been so unsettled as to raise the question on both sides the Atlantic whether the time has not come when some foreign power ought, in the general interests of society, to *intervene* to establish a protectorate, or some other form of government in that country, and guarantee its continuance there."

This was a note of warning, showing that the United States, though jealous of the intervention of European powers, yet recognized the possibility — perhaps the necessity — of such. In March, 1860, the governments of France, England, and Spain, under pretext that the war in Mexico would be interminable, offered mediation, proposing to guarantee to one party the establishment of social reforms, and to the other that of conservative political principles. The conservative, or Church party — which the foreign powers were disposed to recognize as the *de facto* government of Mexico, while the Mexicans themselves disavowed

it — invited mediation; but the republican president sternly and steadily refused it. The popular vote sanctioned his course a few months later in re-electing him constitutional president of the Republic.

The defeat of the army of the Church was not immediately followed by peace, its scattered forces formed themselves into marauding bands, which robbed and murdered indiscriminately. It was not the fault of Juarez that peace was not at once restored, for, in addition to foes without, he had enemies in his own party. Personal ambition, and the desire of each one to carry out his various theories of government, caused divisions in the Liberal ranks. "The people had risen in arms against despotism; it was necessary to restore this body to their normal condition in the republic, and to cause them to return to their distinct social positions, from which they had been forcibly driven by the tumult and the necessities of the conflict. Each several State considered itself as a political entity, and was accustomed during the civil war to an unlimited sovereignty. "With the varied and conflicting elements of the difficult situation were interwoven the pretensions of the diplomatic representatives, growing out of the different international questions which had arisen in the nation during the course of the civil war."

The country was entirely exhausted, it was impoverished, and the government without funds. To provide these it was compelled to resort to extraordinary measures, even to imprison capitalists and negotiate forced loans. * In this great strait it was resolved to suspend payment of the

* The obnoxious article in the law of 17th July, 1861, is as follows:— "ART. I. *From the date of this law the government of the Union will recover the complete product of the federal revenues, deducting from them only the expenses of the administration of collecting, and all payments are suspended for two years, including the assignments for the loan made in London and for the foreign conventions.*"

interest on all debts, internal and foreign, for the space of two years from July 17, 1861. With the funds thus obtained from their revenues, diverted temporarily to the relief of the country, all armed opposition could be put down, internal peace preserved, and order restored. "This once achieved, the leaders of the party would adhere to the written constitution, and enforce obedience to law; and industry, secure in its reward, would soon take the place of idleness and crime."

This certainly would have followed; but the struggling party — represented by its congress and president — made a serious blunder when it suspended the payment of its foreign obligations.* Though it was argued that the suspension was but temporary, in order to allow the exhausted nation a chance to breathe, and to restore law and order, Mexico's foreign creditors did not view the matter in that favorable light. The ministers of France and England — especially the former, who was deeply in sympathy with the Church party, and detested the Liberals — immediately resented this "outrage" against their governments. It finally ended in their demanding their passports and suspending diplomatic communication. The claims of France were ridiculously small, and based upon questionable transactions. Those of England were greater, but founded upon claims equally unjust. Over half a million was for the robbery of the English legation by the minions of the very Church party that was urging intervention, and a large sum for indemnity for outrages upon British subjects by the guerillas of the Church — the "Party of the Reaction," or retrograde principles. Such as they were,

* The amount of this indebtedness, in 1861, was: English Bondholders, $63,000,000; English "Convention," $5,000,000; Spanish "Convention," $8,000,000; French (exaggerated) about $10,000,000. Total about $86,000,000.

however, they had been secured by treaty, and the government in power was bound to respect them. Making this act of the Juarez government a pretext, Spain, France, and England entered into the tripartite alliance, in London, October 31, 1861. A few months later, December 22, 1861, Spanish troops were landed at Vera Cruz, under General Prim, and the ships of England and France were on their way to the same port.

The government of the United States had been kept advised of the progress of events by its ministers in England and Mexico, and was not unprepared for all that followed. Mr. Corwin, two weeks after the passage of the law, had written Mr. Seward as follows: "Her (Mexico's) late suspension, leading to the cessation of diplomatic relations with England and France, may, perhaps, have been imprudent. She could not pay her debts, however, and maintain her government; and perhaps it was as well to say she would not pay for two years as to promise to pay and submit herself to the mortification of constantly asking further time. She is impoverished to the last degree by forty years of civil war. . . . . I cannot find in this republic any men of any party better qualified, in my judgment, for the task than those in power. If they do not save her, then I am quite sure *she is to be the prey of some foreign power.*"

The United States was invited by the powers (though tardily) to join them in demanding redress; but she assured them that, far from having a desire to destroy the autonomy of Mexico, she had instructed her minister there to offer to negotiate a loan for her relief. This answer to the allied powers (in part) is given here, that coming generations may be reminded of the friendliness of our government to our sister republic, and of the wisdom and forbearance that guided the ship of state during the dark period when civil war disturbed our own land.

"It is true, as the high contracting parties assume, that the United States have, on their part, claims to urge against Mexico. Upon due consideration, however, the President is of opinion that it would be inexpedient to seek satisfaction of their claims at this time through an act of accession to the convention. Among the reasons for this decision are, first, that the United States, so far as it is practicable, prefer to adhere to a traditional policy, recommended to them by the father of their country and confirmed by a happy experience, which forbids them from making alliances with foreign nations; second, Mexico being a neighbor of the United States on this continent, and possessing a system of government similar to our own in many of its important features, the United States habitually cherish *a decided good-will* towards that republic, and a lively interest in its security, prosperity, and welfare. Animated by these sentiments, the United States do not feel inclined to resort to forcible remedies for their claims at the present moment, when the government of Mexico is deeply disturbed by factions within and war with foreign nations. And, of course, the same sentiments render them still more disinclined to allied war against Mexico, than to war to be urged against her by themselves alone."

"The undersigned is further authorized to state to the plenipotentiaries, for the information of Spain, France, and Great Britain, that the United States are so earnestly anxious for the safety and welfare of the republic of Mexico, that they have already empowered their minister residing there to enter into a treaty with the Mexican republic, conceding to it some material aid and advantages, which it is to be hoped may enable that republic to satisfy the just claims and demands of the said sovereigns, and so avert the war which these sovereigns have agreed among each other to levy against Mexico." *

* "Diplomatic Correspondence, Mexican Affairs," 1862, p. 189.

This friendly offer could not, however, be entertained, as the allied powers considered the Mexicans answerable, not only for the guaranteed interest on their claims, but for the repeated outrages the subjects of these powers had received at the hands of her soldiers and citizens.

Owing to the masterly diplomatic action of Señores Zamacona and Doblado, a treaty was made by which the English and Spanish troops returned to their ships, glad to retreat from the disgraceful position into which they had been forced. The French troops, however, persisted in marching into the interior, the Emperor of France considering this a good opportunity for the establishment of French dominion in Mexico, while the country was vexed with distracting strifes and while the United States, likewise, were plunged into the horrors of civil war.

They occupied Orizaba without opposition, and in May marched upon Puebla, where they were repulsed by General Zaragoza.

[A. D. 1862.] This victory, known in Mexican annals as the "glorious victory of the Fifth of May," was the most decisive ever won by the Mexicans against a foreign foe. The yearly anniversary of this day is celebrated throughout the republic with great rejoicings.

The Emperor of France sent to Mexico his best troops, and a year later, in May, 1863, General Forey, commander of these forces, advanced upon Puebla and took it. On the thirty-first of the same month they took possession of the capital, the Juarez government retreating into the interior, taking its stand, in June, in San Luis Potosi. Augmented by the troops of the Church party, — Mexicans recreant to their obligations to their country — the French advanced steadily, northward and southward. Juarez, with his loyal cabinet, was driven from place to place, at last reaching Chihuahua, and finally taking refuge in Paso del Norte, a small town on the border.

Napoleon and his battalions accomplished (perhaps) for Mexico what her various rulers had never yet been able to do — they aroused that spark of patriotism so long dormant in many breasts, and united her people against the invaders. Upon all sides might have been seen the rising of an aroused and outraged population. Generals fit to command were quickly found — born of the emergency — to lead these patriots. We cannot name them all. The savior of the south, fighting desperately in Oaxaca, was General Porfirio Diaz, who later became president of the republic; Negretti and Escobedo disputed with the enemy in the north.

THE ADVENT OF MAXIMILIAN.

Upon starting out on the expedition against Mexico, France expressly disclaimed any intention of interfering in the internal affairs of that country. The following extract from the letter of instructions from the minister of France to Rear Admiral Gravière, commanding the French squadron, will explain the assumed attitude of the powers: "The allied powers do not propose to themselves, I have said to you, any other object than that which is indicated in the convention; *they forbid each other from interfering in the internal affairs of the country, and especially from exercising any pressure upon the wishes of the people as to the choice of their government.*"

Notwithstanding the protestations of France, her troops had no sooner shaken themselves clear of those of England and Spain, than they at once marched upon the two chief cities of Mexico, took them, and immediately prepared the way for the imposition of a foreign ruler upon the unwilling inhabitants. They occupied the city of Mexico on the 10th of June; on the 16th, the French general issued a decree for the formation of a provisional government. A "Superior Junta" was elected, by the influence of the French

commander-in-chief, and this Junta chose a substitute for Congress under the name of the "Assembly of Notables," composed of two hundred and fifteen persons. The Assembly invested the president and secretaries with extraordinary powers, and they were solemnly installed on the 8th of July. In other words, the Junta elected the Assembly, and the Assembly chose the Junta, to be the supreme executive power of Mexico, — a farcical proceeding as ridiculous as it was iniquitous! Three clauses of their "Decree," issued July 11, 1863, will explain who were the moving spirits, and what their motives : —

1st. "The Mexican Nation (?) adopts for its form of government a limited, hereditary monarchy, *with a Catholic prince.*

2d. The Sovereign will take the title of Emperor of Mexico.

3d. The Imperial Crown of Mexico is offered to His Imperial Highness, Prince Ferdinand Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, for him and his descendants."

On the 15th of August a commission embarked at Vera Cruz for Europe, empowered by the "provisional executive power," or the regency, to offer the crown of Mexico to Prince Maximilian. They were received by the Archduke on the third of October, at his residence near Trieste, the Castle of Miramar. Two years previously, on the 30th of October, at the time the powers were drawing up the tripartite treaty of alliance, a party of Mexicans residing in Paris had addressed Maximilian, inviting him to the mythical throne of Mexico. His reply at that time was worthy of him ; it was as follows : "My co-operation in favor of the work of governmental transformation, on which depends, according to your convictions, the salvation of Mexico, could not be determined, unless that a *national manifestation* should prove to me, *in an undoubted manner, the desire*

of the nation to see me occupy the throne." These sentiments he expressed two years later, when the commission (appointed by the Assembly of Notables, which had been elected by the Junta, which had been elected by the Assembly) approached him with their flattering offer. He declined accepting it until he had heard an expression of the people's voice.

[A. D. 1864.] This the regency pretended to obtain, and in March, 1864, another deputation waited upon him and claimed compliance with his promise. Misled by what he was led to believe was a popular call to the throne, he yielded his consent, and on the tenth day of April, at the Castle of Miramar, accepted definitely the crown of Mexico. On the same day, the treaty of Miramar was signed between Maximilian and Napoleon III., by which the French Emperor pledged himself to support the new ruler until firmly seated upon his throne, both with his legions and with his gold.

After taking leave of his royal relatives, and after a journey to Rome to receive the special blessing of the Pope, Maximilian and Carlota, Emperor and Empress of Mexico, set sail for the distant country they had been called upon to govern across the sea.

Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, brother to the Emperor Francis Joseph, was born in 1832. Educated in the company of the most accomplished personages of the Austrian court, he had acquired a refinement of deportment that set off well his natural endowments. He spoke fluently six or seven languages, and his intellectual acquirements were of a high order. In 1857 he was married to the Princess Maria Charlotte Amalia, daughter of Leopold I., King of the Belgians. This Princess, Carlota, — with whose sad history all the world is familiar — was at the time of her marriage seventeen years of age, and pos-

sessed of more accomplishments than usually adorn even one of her exalted rank. Her charms of mind and person are acknowledged by all, even by those most bitterly opposed to her occupation of the position in which she was falsely placed. Personally, then, these young sovereigns, in whose hands had been placed the destinies of the Mexican people, were well qualified to win their love and esteem. They arrived at Vera Cruz on the 28th of May, 1864, where they were received with apparent enthusiasm,



PORTRAIT OF MAXIMILIAN.

and then set out for the capital, all the way treated by the local authorities of towns and villages with popular demonstrations of affectionate greeting.

At this late day, passing in review the acts of Maximilian, we believe that he was honest, first, in believing that he was called to Mexico by the popular voice; second, in accepting as sincere those expressions of joy at his arrival, from the people along the route he travelled, then under French control. But he saw only a superficial demonstra-

tion; deep down in the nation's heart still strongly throbbed the desire for liberty — for the people, of the people, and *by* the people. Every grace of person and endowment of intellect he doubtless possessed; but he was not the people's choice; he had been imposed upon them by the machinations of a heartless and intriguing priesthood, and supported by the bayonets of a foreign despot. When the bayonets should be withdrawn both ruler and priesthood would fall to earth.



PORTRAIT OF CARLOTA.

They arrived in the capital on the 12th of June, and took up their residence in the national palace. Later on, Maximilian reconstructed the Castle of Chapultepec, which became their favorite retreat, and they also dwelt in Cuernavaca and Orizaba. One of his first public acts was the issuing of a general amnesty to all political prisoners, including those who had been sentenced; and he seems to have been animated by a sincere desire for the restoration of peace and the promotion of the welfare of his subjects. It has been said that the empire under Maximilian was as

republican as the republic; yet it was an empire, costly in its maintenance and supported by foreign mercenary troops, for whose services the very people they were tyrannizing over were obliged to pay! Great improvements were made in the streets of the city and in the suburbs, the most important of which were, the adorning of the great central square with flowers, trees, and fountains, and the laying out of the great avenue known as the *Grand Paseo*, leading to Chapultepec, which also was beautified at the people's cost. Large loans were contracted in London for the payment of the hireling troops and for the costly improvements; loans which the republic of Mexico, since the establishment of its independence, would be perfectly justified in repudiating.

It soon became apparent to the leaders of the Church party that they had not, in Maximilian, the willing tool they wished for the forwarding of their designs. His views were more liberal than theirs; his sympathy with the people more pronounced and genuine. Perceiving that the republican movement was that of the masses, he would have identified himself with them; but its loyal leaders strongly rejected his overtures. He soon found himself deserted and betrayed by the party that had called him to power in Mexico, and supported only by the strength of his Austrian, French, and Belgian legions. He precipitated his downfall and hurried matters to a crisis in October, 1865, by signing what is known as the "black decree," which proclaimed all persons found fighting against the forces of the empire as banditti, and ordered that all such should be shot as soon as captured. By this decree many prominent republicans were murdered, including the brave Generals, Salazar and Arteaga. The feeling engendered against Maximilian by the publishing of this infamous proclamation was so deep that it eventually wrought his

destruction. It is claimed by his friends that he signed it at the instigation of General Bazaine, commander-in-chief of the French forces, after great pressure had been brought to bear upon him, and that he afterwards used great exertions to prevent executions under this act. It was necessary to use severe measures to check the progress of the guerillas, who swarmed throughout the country, and even infested the mountains around the valley of Mexico. If an excuse could be found in a retaliatory measure so harsh, it will be found in a decree of Juarez, similar in its provisions, against the imperialists, in which the death penalty is frequently applied, and which was issued January 25, 1862. It was made contrary to the provisions of the constitution, which especially says that no two functions shall be invested in one body, as it was issued upon the sole authority of Juarez himself. "While this law of January 25, 1862, stares the world in the face," says one of Maximilian's defenders, "the complaint of inhumanity against Maximilian comes with bad grace from the lips of the Juarez party." Further, in extenuation of the offences attributed to the emperor, it must be borne in mind that, while the French troops (who committed the greater part of these outrages against inoffensive Mexicans) were under the absolute control of their commander, (according to the treaty of Miramar), yet Maximilian, as the head of the nation, was responsible for their deeds!

[A. D. 1866.] While the powers of the United States were engaged in crushing a gigantic rebellion at home, the French troops were at liberty to support the empire in Mexico; but as soon as this was quelled Secretary Seward intimated to Napoleon that they must be withdrawn. This, in short, is the substance of a long diplomatic correspondence.

And the result was that, yielding to the pressure brought

to bear upon him by the United States, the Emperor of France relinquished his pet scheme of establishing an empire in the New World, and abandoned Maximilian to his fate, withdrawing his troops in disgrace. This was carried into effect in February, 1866.

News of this deplorable decision first reached Maximilian at his country retreat in Cuernavaca. Carlota, his noble wife, immediately volunteered to proceed to France to throw herself at the feet of Napoleon and implore him to continue his assistance. Leaving Mexico in July she arrived at Paris in August, and immediately sought an interview with the emperor. Her efforts were without avail, for he decidedly refused to permit another French soldier to set foot in Mexico, nor would he advance another franc for the support of the tottering empire. Overwhelmed with despair at the appalling prospect before her and her husband, Carlota left Paris and went to Rome, where she soon gave evidence that her reason had been shaken by the long series of trials she had undergone. She was conducted to her native country, Belguim, where she was confined in a castle near Brussels, and where she has since remained, subject to occasional fits of insanity.

The remaining scenes of this tragedy were quickly shifted, and the drama of the empire soon taken from the stage.

Each succeeding day saw Maximilian deeper in debt, the number of his friends decrease, and the growth of the movement against him. Seeing himself abandoned on all sides he resolved to abdicate the throne; he even went so far as to set out for the coast, reaching Orizaba, in October, where he received news that induced him to return.

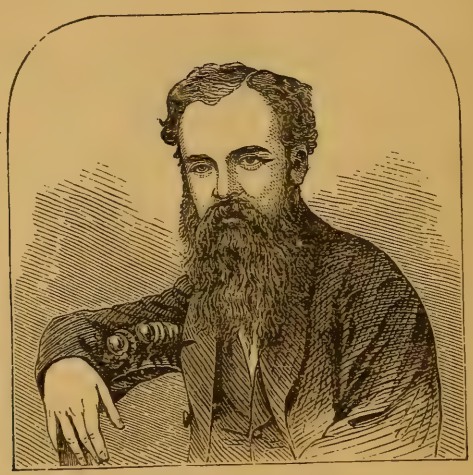
The leaders of the conservative party became alarmed; the departure of Maximilian would prove their certain ruin; the recent return from Europe of Miramon and Marquez,

two of their ablest generals, decided them to unite their ranks and to resist to the last the progress of the Liberal forces. Acting upon their advice and representations, he returned to the capital in December.

While these events, narrated in the previous pages, had been transpiring, the patriot Juarez and his loyal cabinet had been the life and soul of the republican party. Through his talented minister at Washington, Romero, the United States government was kept informed of the true state of affairs. The value to Mexico of the labors of Mr. Romero cannot be overestimated. Though the direct successes of the Liberal arms are attributable to other leaders in various parts of the country, Juarez and his small circle of faithful adherents had formed a nucleus about which gathered the representatives of the people, and the central point from which emanated orders for their guidance. Driven from place to place by the advance of the French forces, he had finally reached the frontier town of El Paso, and had he retreated farther he would have been obliged to seek a refuge in the United States. Upon the withdrawal of the foreign hirelings he had again returned southward, like the reflex waves of the ocean, which, though driven high upon the strand, return to their centre of propulsion. He had now reached the city of Zacatecas, and able generals were in command of his continually augmenting forces. Acting with great energy, the imperialist forces marched upon Zacatecas and took it, Juarez and his cabinet narrowly escaping capture and retreating to San Luis Potosi.

[A. D. 1867.] The victorious army of Miramon was met by the avenging army of the north (Liberal) on the 1st of February, 1867, and nearly annihilated; but, escaping to Queretaro, the forces were organized anew and prepared to resist, at that point, the onward march of the republican hosts.

Queretaro is an ancient city, having been founded in 1531, on the site of a still more ancient Indian town. It is delightfully situated in a fertile valley, shut in by mountains on every side, and has a temperature combining the warmth of the hot country with that of the temperate region, as it lies at an altitude of 6,365 feet above the sea. Not only is it celebrated as the point where the empire of Maximilian was finally overthrown, but as that where the treaty with the United States, in 1848, was ratified by the Mexican Congress.



MATIAS ROMERO.

On the 19th of February, Maximilian reached Queretaro with reinforcements, received by the army and by the populace with enthusiasm. With the subsequent addition of another army under Marquez, the force at the command of Miramon was increased to nearly nine thousand men. The Liberal army has been estimated as high as thirty thousand, as the whole northern country contributed its quotas, and was under the command of General Escobedo, a valiant patriot, who had received his schooling in the war with the United States, and in various revolutions. The



QUERETARO, FROM THE HILL OF BELLS.

city was invested so closely that provisions became exhausted, and the soldiers and citizens suffered extremely. Active preparations for defence went on, in which Maximilian took a leading part. Finally, on the night of the 14th of May, a portion of the Liberal forces obtained entrance into the city, through the treachery of one of Miramon's officers, a Colonel Lopez, and by daylight the city was in their possession.

Maximilian was captured in the outskirts of the city, at the hill of bells — *Cerro de las Campañas*, — Miramon was wounded and captured; and, indeed, the entire force of the besieged surrendered, with but little resistance or bloodshed. A court-martial was soon held for the trial of the three high commanding officers, and they were summarily condemned to death. On the nineteenth of June, 1867, was performed the last act of this terrible tragedy, when the Emperor Maximilian and Generals Miramon and Mejia were shot, by order of the court-martial and with the sanction of the commanding officer, Escobedo, and President Juarez.

It has been claimed that Maximilian was tried and sentenced contrary to the constitution of Mexico, contrary to the laws of nations, and contrary to the expressed wishes of the United States; but it was considered necessary (in those days, when the national existence hung trembling in the balance), that a terrible example should be made, as a warning to foreign powers. The martyrs to the imperialist cause met their death with firmness, and Maximilian especially, says the Mexican historian, with the valor of a gentleman and the dignity of a prince. The place where occurred this lamentable event is known as the *Cerro de las Campañas*, the same "hill of bells" at which Maximilian gave up his sword. Three crosses mark the spot where they fell, and indicate where the last Emperor of Mexico met his death.

After the capture of Queretaro, the victorious Liberal army passed on towards the capital. Desperate fighting had been going on in and near the Mexican valley. General Diaz, coming up from the south, had laid siege to Puebla, which was defended by the imperialist General Noriega. During the siege of Queretaro, when affairs



EXECUTION OF MAXIMILIAN.

appeared to be in a critical condition, Maximilian had despatched General Marquez to Mexico for reinforcements. This man, a traitor alike to his country and to his adopted cause, disobeyed the command, and, instead of hastening back to the succor of his beleaguered comrades, marched with his command against Diaz at Puebla. After taking

the city by storm, Diaz turned upon Marquez and completely defeated him, the traitor leaving his troops to their fate and fleeing to the capital. There he conducted the most high-handed proceedings, under pretence of preparing the capital for defence. The city of Mexico was soon invested by the Liberal troops, the valley filled with their armies, under the supreme command of General Diaz. On the 20th of June, after a siege of over two months, the city was attacked at all points, and sustained a terrible fire of artillery for several hours. On the 21st, it was occupied by General Diaz, at the head of the republican troops. Vera Cruz was occupied on the 4th of July, and thus, during the summer of 1867, the whole country came under republican rule.

The 15th of July witnessed the entrance of Juarez and his cabinet, those loyal patriots who had been driven from the capital four years previously, and who now returned to witness the triumph of the principles for which they had so long contended.

In November, the body of Maximilian was delivered to the Austrian admiral, Tegethoff, and was carried to Trieste, in the same frigate, the "Novara," in which the unfortunate prince and princess had sailed for Mexico, three years before.

CHAPTER XXXV.

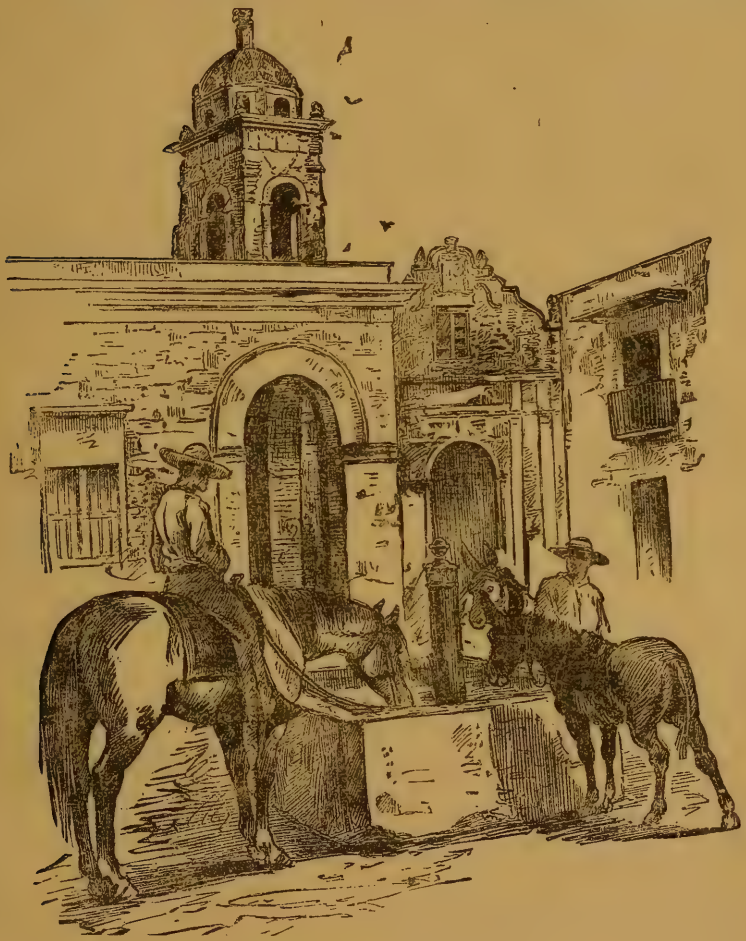
MEXICO AFTER THE EMPIRE.

FEAR, even terror, possessed all those who had taken an active part in the foreign intervention, when they saw the inflexible determination the patriots had taken to sweep every obstacle from their path. This terrible government had not hesitated to destroy Prince Maximilian, brother of the Emperor of Austria; it had not halted for a moment in its stern resolve to plant the flag of liberty in the capital of the republic.

Now in power, with all its enemies within its grasp, those traitors who had aided foreigners in destroying domestic government had every reason to fear the most terrible reprisals. But, after the fever of victory had cooled, moderate measures prevailed, and though several hundred of the opposition were imprisoned, but few were condemned to death, and most of these eventually escaped punishment. Vidaurri, the traitor governor of a northern State, was an expiatory victim, while the arch-traitor of all, Marquez, escaped to Havana with his ill-gotten wealth. Before the end of the year 1867 the government had settled down to the work of reconstruction; it issued decrees for the payment of the internal debt, for the construction of railroads, for the organization of public instruction, and a change in the coinage at the public mints.

On the 25th of December Don Benito Juarez, in accordance with the expressed will of the people in a majority of votes for president, renewed possession of the executive.

The principal event of this year, after the establishment of government, was the attempt to excite rebellion by no less a personage than Santa Anna. The coming of Maximilian had found him an exile in Cuba and the island of



STREET SCENE IN MEXICO.

Saint Thomas. He at once offered his services to the emperor, but, being badly received, was converted into a decided enemy, and, after coming to the United States, he tendered his assistance to Juarez. Rejected by the

Liberals, he determined to organize a rebellion against the government, and chartered a steamer for Yucatan, where, instead of friends he found enemies; he was seized, incarcerated in the fortress at Vera Cruz, and after trial condemned to death, which sentence was commuted by Juarez to eight years of exile. He returned to Mexico in 1874, under shelter of the general proclamation of amnesty, and died in obscurity in 1877.

The first days of the new government were pacific, but unfortunately there soon commenced contentions among the Liberals themselves. The first cause of serious trouble was the necessary retrenchment of the military, and the disbanding and sending to their homes of the greater portion of the army. The brigades of Generals Diaz and Riva Palacio — who had rendered distinguished services — were disbanded, and these commanders retired to their homes in disgust. In the month of January, 1868, a rebellion appeared in Yucatan, which was only crushed by the energetic action of General Alatorre with a government force of two thousand men. In the state of Sinaloa there broke out a rebellion of threatening proportions, which was likewise quelled by the constitutional army.

The gravest complications arose with the states of Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi, as also of Jalisco and Queretaro. In San Luis, on the 15th of December, 1869, Colonel Aguirre, with a large force of regular troops, *pronounced* against the government, and seized large supplies of material of war. The Governor of Zacatecas and also the legislature declared against the federal authorities, and between them there soon appeared an army of eight thousand men. Rebel leaders also rose up in the states of Mexico, Hidalgo and Morelia, signs of disturbance were visible in Puebla, a party attacked Orizaba, another appeared at Jalapa; it appeared for the time as if the country was

to return to the state of anarchy in which the intervention had found it. But the star of the federal government was in the ascendant; it successively met and defeated the rebels, dispersed the rank and file and shot the leaders, and within three months the disturbances were quelled, and Peace folded her wings for a while above the unhappy country. For the unprecedented period of seven months the country was unvexed by revolutions, but continued to be infested with criminals of every sort, notwithstanding numerous executions by the government. Peace was preserved, not so much by the exertions of those in power as by the people themselves, who were looking forward to the prospective presidential election, and holding themselves ready to act according to the emergency of the moment. It soon became evident that Juarez would not willingly yield the power he had obtained at so much risk and bloodshed, and would hold himself up for re-election. He had two formidable opponents in his own party — the conservative party not yet presuming to reassert itself. These were: Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, and General Porfirio Diaz.

Señor Lerdo was one of the most remarkable men of the epoch in which he exerted an influence. He was born in Jalapa in 1825, and educated in Mexico. A lawyer by profession, he was elected, in 1855, a magistrate of the Supreme Court, and in 1861 a deputy to Congress. In 1863 he departed from the capital in company with Juarez, a member of that immortal cabinet that for four years followed the fortunes of their chief, and strove to uphold the principles of the constitution during that dark period of adversity. His firm character contributed more than anything else to the success of the plans of Juarez, and these two formed an invincible force that eventually overcame the machinations of the enemies of their country.

He was certainly entitled to the consideration of the leaders of the Liberal party, and deserved well of the people he had so nobly battled for to conserve as a nation.

There were then, the followers of Juarez — *Juaristas;* those of Lerdo — *Lerdistas* — who opposed the principle of re-election as anti-democratic; and a party of the opposition, mainly officers of the army, who fixed upon Porfirio Diaz, and hence called themselves *Porfiristas*, or "Constitutionalists."

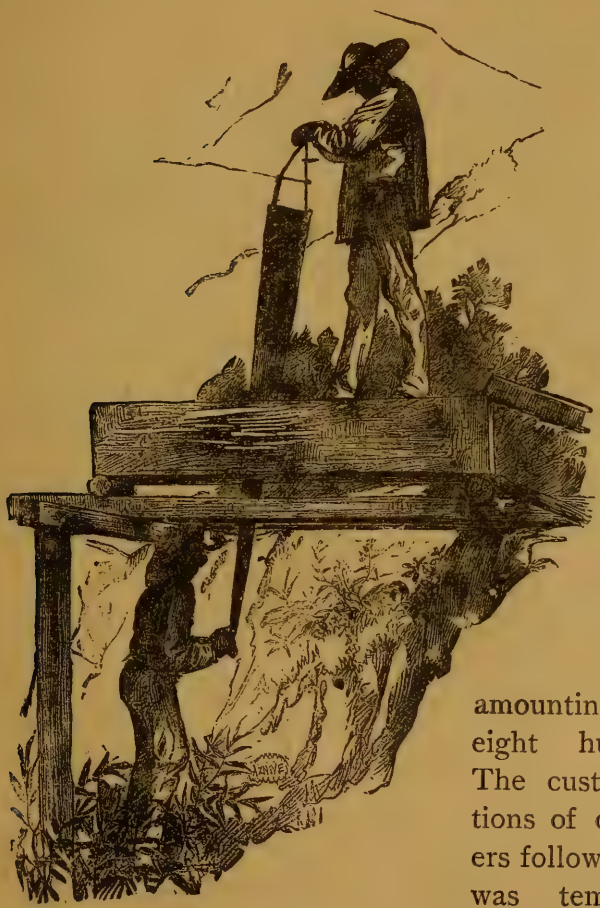
In the beginning of 1870 the principal papers of the republic took sides with one party or the other, and party



PORTRAIT OF LERDO DE TEJADA.

quarrels were soon commenced. In May, 1871, the first of the series of *pronunciamientos* declared itself at Tampico, when the federal garrison pronounced against the constitutional government. Troops were sent against them, and a battle resulted, in which more than six hundred men were either killed or wounded. The most terrible of the rebellions against constitutional authority was that which took place in the capital on the 1st of October, in which the rebels got possession of the citadel, containing arms and military stores, armed nearly six hundred prisoners

liberated from the jail of Belem, and bade defiance to the upholders of the laws. President Juarez was left nearly alone in the palace, surrounded by a small guard, but he preserved his habitual calmness and serenity, quickly summoned his faithful generals, and made preparations for bringing the rebels to order. The citadel was attacked and carried at the point of the bayonet, but only after great loss, the dead and wounded on both sides amounting to nearly eight hundred men. The customary executions of culpable leaders followed, and peace was temporarily restored.



MEXICAN SAW-MILL.

[A. D. 1871.] On the 12th of October Juarez was declared re-elected, obtaining a majority of votes through many deputies refraining from voting. In order to show that it really was what the opposition were pleased to call an "electoral farce" it will only be necessary to glance at

the annexed figures. The electoral districts, according to the census, contained 8,836,411 inhabitants. The total number of votes cast was 12,361, of which Juarez received 5,837, Diaz 3,555, and Lerdo 2,874. The re-election of Juarez was the signal for the discontented of the other two parties, into which the Liberals were divided, to resort to arms. Some had hoped that his re-election would be the sign of peace, others had contended that it would be a signal for civil war. "The truth is," says the historian, whose narrative we are mainly following * (himself a Mexican), "that the peace in Mexico will never be consolidated until they learn to respect invariably the law, and so long as those who lose continue to appeal to arms." Well may the disinterested spectator have concluded, with those foreign leaders who united to intervene in Mexican politics, that the Mexicans could not — nor would they ever be able to — govern themselves. The friend of Mexico, viewing the affairs of that time at a distance, may well have despaired of the political regeneration of her people. More than a thousand men — without regarding previous revolutions — had been killed in the year 1871, in a time of peace; yet these headstrong leaders again rushed to arms, prepared to desolate the country in a prolonged fratricidal strife! On the 8th of November General Diaz issued a manifesto at his hacienda of Noria — hence called the "Plan of Noria" — in which he called for an "Assembly," to bring about a new order of things. Outbreaks and rebellions followed close upon this manifesto, and the end of 1871 saw the country again in disturbance, rebels swarming everywhere, and Diaz hiding in the mountains about Mexico. In an encounter between Juarez and Diaz troops, in the last days of December, nearly nine hundred men were put *hors de combat*, and

* PAYNO: "*Compendio de la Historia de Mexico.*"



SCENE IN THE TIERRA TEMPLADA, OR TEMPERATE COUNTY.

many brave officers were killed and wounded. The right arm of the government at this time was General Rocha, who was continually fighting the rebels, first in one part of the country and then in another, making prodigious marches and performing most difficult feats of arms with his veteran soldiers.

The real, or pretended cause of the disaffection of the people (as we have seen) was the electoral question. Though the great services of Juarez were generally recognized, yet his long continuance in power, and his continued arbitrary acts, had now disgusted the people of the several states. They looked upon him as a despot, many of them, and regarded his retention of the presidential chair as unconstitutional. The campaign against the revolutionists continued twelve or fourteen months, but by the end of May, 1872, the country was nearly pacified.

[A. D. 1872.] An unexpected event brought all revolutionary proceedings to a close, in July, by the removal of the cause. On the eighteenth of that month, death suddenly visited President Juarez, and transferred this incorruptible patriot to a higher court. His remains were interred with great solemnity on the 23d of July, over four thousand persons taking part in the funeral ceremonies.

His successor, President Lerdo (President of the Court of Justice), was quietly installed, and the functions of government were as regularly performed as before. No radical change occurred, Señor Lerdo carrying out the plans of his predecessor, appealing to the nation to observe the cause of reform, and issuing a general amnesty, under which those yet in rebellion came in and gave themselves up, and resistance to lawful authority ceased. The commission appointed by Congress to decide upon the matter declared Lerdo to be the constitutional president, he having received 10,465 votes, against 678 cast for Diaz.

[A. D. 1873.] In January, 1873, the Mexican railroad, connecting the city of Mexico with Vera Cruz, was inaugurated. This road, now for the first time thrown open to the public, had been sixteen years in process of construction, and was a work of such magnitude that it is even now considered a marvel of engineering skill. Early in the commercial history of Mexico, the necessity had been felt for improved means of communication between the coast and the capital. A "concession," (the first) had been granted so far back as 1837; in 1842 Santa Anna declared an additional duty of two per cent of the customs for the benefit of this and other highways; in 1851 two or three miles had been constructed; in 1857 the concession passed into the hands of Señor Escandon, a capitalist of Mexico; in 1864 this right was ceded to the "Imperial Mexican Company," recognized by Maximilian, and in 1867 (when but forty-seven miles were completed) the Juarez government annulled its privileges for treating with a foreign power; these were, however, restored, in 1858, and the work went on. The difficulties encountered were almost insuperable, but, under the direction of English and Mexican engineers, the mountains were successfully scaled, and the capital of Mexico placed in connection with its chief seaport by January 1, 1873. The direct line is two hundred and sixty-three miles in length, and with the branch to the city of Puebla, about three hundred miles.

The year 1872 was noted for the number of its assassinations and for the abductions of prominent citizens. One well-known citizen of the capital was abducted in one of the streets of the city and incarcerated in a dungeon under most cruel conditions. The governor acted vigorously with the abductors, who were captured and shot. In May, 1873, the passions of the people were excited by the

severe treatment and expulsion of some Jesuits from the country.

It was in 1874, in the month of March, that the *first Protestant martyr*, John L. Stephens, was murdered by Roman Catholic fanatics, in the town of Ahualulco. The introduction of the Bible into Mexico, and the dissemination of Christian ideas was the work of devout men who followed in the track of the American army, in 1847. Until that time the centuries of darkness had been unillumined by biblical truth.

At about the same time that Mr. Stephens was assassinated, two commercial travellers were murdered on the highway; their murderers were caught and summarily shot, while those of the Protestant minister were allowed to escape, though condemned to death. The native historian naïvely states it in the following words: "The governor and authorities displayed much activity and the assassins of Bartholy were apprehended and shot; those of Stephens were condemned to death!"

The Protestant Episcopal Church, in 1871, sent out a missionary, in the person of Rev. H. C. Riley, and mission work was initiated in Mexico. He was closely followed by Presbyterian missionaries, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Methodists. The latter sect has been, undoubtedly, the most successful, and to them the field is virtually conceded. In the city of Mexico they were granted a portion of a vast old conventual structure, and the government — notwithstanding the opposition of the Romish Church — exhibited a friendliness that was encouraging. Churches, chapels and mission-houses have been erected and congregations formed, until at the present time there are over two hundred preachers in the field, the majority being native Mexicans. They have not escaped persecution, and rarely a year passes that some missionary is not

murdered. In spite of the fact that the Roman Catholics are not in power, they manage to keep alive the slumbering embers of fanaticism, and every few months fan it into a flame that is not extinguished save with the blood of a Protestant.

To the credit of the present government, it must be said that it endeavors faithfully to protect the new sects it encouraged to enter this wide field. The Methodists, under Rev. Dr. Butler, publish an excellent Christian paper, and are indefatigable in their efforts to extend the gospel of truth and righteousness.

Save for the operations of guerillas, in remote and unprotected districts, and a rising against federal authority in Michoacan and Sinaloa — which rebellions lasted nearly eighteen months — the years of 1874 and 1875 passed by without disturbance. An arbitrary act of the government, — the expulsion from the territory of the Sisters of Charity, in 1874 — again brought the religious question before the press, and awoke the most bitter feelings in the breasts of the people. Though the government defended its action by the plea of the necessity of making thorough work of the religious orders, and urged the same objections against the Sisters of Charity as against the Jesuits — namely, that they were in the service of the Pope, and secretly undermining the lawful government of Mexico — yet one cannot help feeling that a more gentle treatment could have been found available. Disregarding all petitions and entreaties, the authorities forced above three hundred of these unfortunate Sisters to leave the country, and seek asylums in other lands, in January and February, 1875. This cruel edict of expulsion revived anew the long-buried passions of many, and gave rise to several insurrections, notably that of Michoacan.

[A. D. 1875.] The army had become by this time well-

drilled and an efficient power, chiefly owing to the indefatigable exertions of General Rocha, who had saved the government from its enemies when struggling against foes raised against it from its own ranks. He was now denounced as designing to use this effective military organization to place himself in power, and thrown into prison. During his short term in prison he may have had occasion to reflect upon the ingratitude of his country, and to pass in review the sad endings of the lives of preceding patriots, from Guerrero to Comonfort, and Mexia.

During 1875 disturbances arose on the border between Mexico and the United States, and the former power exhibited her desire to mete out justice by ordering her general in command in that section (Tamaulipas) under arrest. In August of the same year Chiapas, a state in the south, bordering on Guatemala, was invaded by a renegade Mexican with a force from Guatemala. Though this invasion was promptly met and the force destroyed, yet it was the occasion of reopening the question of territory between the two republics of Mexico and Guatemala. The latter republic laid claim to Chiapas, or at the least the province of Soconusco, and the question is still pending between the two governments, though with every probability of being settled by the retention of this territory as a portion of Mexico.

The years 1874 and 1875 were attended with a less number of murders and crimes in general than any preceding epoch, and the offenders met with more speedy and impartial punishment, yet the list of crimes is by no means small. The important events of this period were the going forth of an expedition to observe the transit of Venus, and the appropriation by Congress of $300,000 to properly represent Mexico at the coming Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Floods and earthquakes vexed the country

during 1875; but the march of improvement, which had commenced on the advent of the Party of Reform, continued its uninterrupted progress.

In December, 1874, a decree of Congress gave to Señores Camacho and Mendizabel a concession for a railroad to Leon. This was the initiatory movement which has resulted in that grand enterprise, a railroad from the capital of Mexico to her northern frontier, at El Paso. Already, in 1873, the question of granting subsidies to railroads to be built by American capitalists had been discussed in Congress. The English railroad, from Vera Cruz to the capital, received an annual benefaction of $560,000; and but for this aid would never have been built, or, if built, could not have been operated. A lottery was established in aid of the new enterprise, called the "Lottery of the Central Railroad." Roads, railways, and telegraph lines continued to be built and started, until, to-day, Mexico is covered with a network of wires, and dissected in every portion by real and projected roads. Under the wise and energetic government of Señor Lerdo, the peace of the country had been preserved and commerce protected. Mexico now began to assert her ancient claim to be considered among the great exporting nations of the world. In the fiscal year ending in 1875 the exports from the port of Vera Cruz amounted to $16,375,586, of which $14,000,000 were in silver ore and gold.

[A. D. 1876.] Towards the end of 1875 it became apparent that the state of peace could not long continue; in fact, the year that brought to us, of the United States, the hundredth anniversary of our independence, was to find unhappy Mexico again plunged into civil war. The inspiring genius of this unfortunate movement, which had for its object the overthrow of the heads of government, was General Porfirio Diaz, who, from a place of security on

the border, directed the revolutionary operations. Instigated by him and his chiefs, rebellions multiplied so fast that the distracted government knew not in which direction to send its troops. The principal of these were the insurrections of the Indians of Oaxaca — birthplace of Diaz — and of Jalisco. From Sonora to Yucatan, the *Porfiristas* were rising. We have seen that General Diaz retired disap-



GENERAL PORFIRIO DIAZ.

pointed to his hacienda, at the disbanding of troops, and in his seclusion, it seems, he had formed his plan for a return to the possession of the power he thirsted to obtain. Murders, assassinations, robberies and abductions were now once more rife in the country, which so recently had enjoyed a short interval of peace, and it seemed as though all the battles of the past fifty years would require to

be fought over again. Space forbids even an enumeration of the *pronunciamientos* of this period. The train to Vera Cruz was stopped, on the 19th of March, and the commander of its escort foully murdered, while all communication with that seaport was for a time interrupted.

In a paper published in Mexico — "The Nineteenth Century" — appeared on the 7th of May, 1876, the "Plan" of General Diaz, dated from Palo Blanco (state of Tamaulipas), in which were denounced the President of the Republic, the Congress and the recognized authorities. This man found a pretext for his revolutionary acts in the declaration that Lerdo did not merit a re-election. A large body of the people shared in this idea, but it was more in accordance with Mexican character to desire a change than to appreciate stability and peace. No fault was found with Señor Lerdo, save that he had retained in his cabinet the old ministers of Juarez, who had become obnoxious to the people, simply from the fact that they had been in office so long! Rotation in office seems to have been a fixed principle in Mexican ideas of government. To state it in brief: the political and military revolutionary leaders of Mexico regarded more highly the benefits accruing from an office than the office itself; and now, disregarding the fact that the country was well governed, sought the overthrow of its leader that they themselves might have a share in the spoils. We have seen similar demagogues in power in our own country; but the difference between them lies mainly in the fact that in one country they appeal to arms, and in the other to the votes of the people; in Mexico many are haply slain before they accomplish much harm; in the United States they run their corrupt careers to the bitter end.

Several bloody actions ensued between the government and the rebel forces, in which hundreds were killed and

wounded. Alatorre and Escobedo were the prominent generals on the Federal side, while Gonzalez, Treviño, and Hernandez were conspicuous as leaders of the rebels. Diaz returned to Mexico at much personal risk, and fleeing to his native hills of Oaxaca, there organized an immense force of the Indians of the sierras, and commenced a march upon the capital. He had previously been defeated in battle in New Leon, whence he had escaped to New Orleans, and thence to Oaxaca, via Vera Cruz.

The popular election for president took place in July, 1876, in which, in every district not occupied by *Porfirista* forces, Lerdo obtained the majority of votes. This popular verdict was sanctioned in September by the electoral college, after a stormy debate, declaring Señor Lerdo de Tejada the constitutional President of Mexico by a vote of 123 to 49.

With a barren treasury, with a country swarming with enemies, and an active foe at the very gates of the capital, Señor Lerdo held no very enviable position. On the 16th of November General Alatorre was defeated by Gonzalez, of the *Porfirista* army, at Tecoac, near Puebla, and this event caused the president to decide upon evacuating (though perhaps temporarily) the city of Mexico. On the 20th he left the city, accompanied by his cabinet and some influential persons, and on the 24th General Porfirio Diaz entered it, at the head of his army.

The so-called constitutional army was composed mainly of the Indians of the sierras (hills) of Oaxaca and Puebla, half-clad and incompletely armed — the very offscourings of the population — and partly of government troops who had been seduced by Diaz.

At this time there were actually *three presidents* in Mexico, each with his cabinet, and each invoking in his favor the Constitution of 1857. Difficult (says the native historian)

is it for the impartial chronicler, much less the youthful reader, to comprehend who was in the right in this political labyrinth. It does not seem difficult to the impartial reader of another nation to decide. On the side of law and order was Lerdo, the constitutionally elected President of the Republic; against him was the usurper, Diaz, at the head of a revolutionary army; and the former president of the Supreme Court of Justice, José Iglesias, who was vainly endeavoring to have himself recognized as supreme ruler.

It does not seem possible that President Lerdo could have had any intention of abandoning the trust committed in him by the people. When we remember his noble bearing during the trying times when in the persecuted cabinet of Juarez, and his firmness in dealing with the foreign invaders, we cannot but wonder at his pusillanimity in deserting the capital without offering resistance to Diaz. It is probable that prudence prevailed over ambition, and that, unwilling to involve his fellow-citizens in bloodshed, he retired until some peaceable solution of the question might present itself. Not meeting with that reception in the interior which he may have reasonably expected — a reaction having set in amongst his own adherents of the military class — he sadly turned his footsteps to the western coast, and taking steamer at Acapulco sought refuge in the United States.

We now see Diaz, who had *pronounced*, not only against Juarez — owing to not having been the object of military preferment — but against Lerdo upon equally trivial pretext — in possession of supreme power in the capital. With a large army at his disposal — for the native Mexican will fight equally well under any leader, and Lerdo's most faithful troops were now most ardent *Porfiristas* — Diaz soon

put down all opposition, and intrenched himself in an impregnable position.

[A. D. 1877.] Previous to sallying forth from the capital to meet the troops of Iglesias, at Queretaro, Diaz named as second general-in-chief of the "constitutional" army, and Provisional President of the Republic, Señor Juan Mendez. Upon the return of Diaz from his northern expedition, his minion, Mendez, issued a call for a convocation for the election of president. The result was that General Porfirio Diaz was "unanimously" declared "constitutional President" of the Republic, on the second day of May, 1877.

The manner of his election cannot fail to bring to mind that Junta of Notables of the Church party, which appointed the Regency, which in turn confirmed in power the aforenamed Junta, which precipitated the French intervention.

The constant state of inquietude on the border, on both sides of the Rio Grande, excited in the minds of many Mexicans the fear that their neighbors of the United States meditated another invasion of their territory. But, notwithstanding the numerous outrages committed by lawless parties of both republics, and the necessity of sending our troops across the border to punish hostile Indians and cattle thieves, no serious complication resulted.

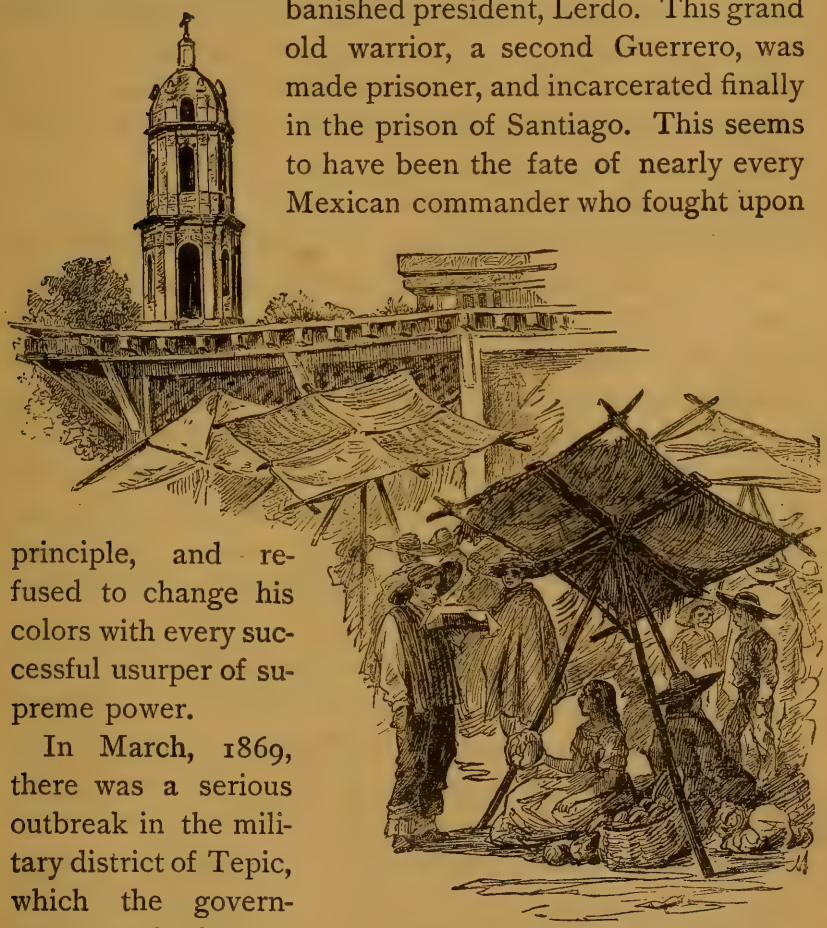
The last revolutionary chief who had vaulted into the presidential chair in Mexico was not at first recognized by the United States.

General Diaz at first experienced considerable difficulty in reorganizing his cabinet, and it was not until the admission of Matias Romero to the management of the affairs of the *Hacienda* — or public treasury — that anything like order was restored. The conservative party had not yet re-

covered from its terrible defeat, but the Liberals still continued divided. They were now known as *Porfiristas*, *Tuxtepecanos*, and *Lerdistas*. The former were the intimate friends of Diaz, who were now recipients of rewards for their devotedness to his interests; the second insisted upon his recognizing the "plans," or pretexts, by which he had placed himself in power; the third party was composed of friends of Lerdo, the only legally-elected president. After a few ineffectual protests, the latter abandoned the field and left the usurper in possession.

[A. D. 1878.] General Diaz, though he had attained his triumph upon the "Plan of Tuxtepec," made no actual changes in the form of government as pursued by his predecessor. His pretext had served his purpose, and had elevated him to command. Policy dictated that he should govern according to the laws of the Constitution of 1857. His own interests demanded that he should place himself at the front of the progressive movement. He had the sagacity of Santa Anna as well as the firmness of that oft-elected ruler of Mexico; and there is no doubt, had occasion demanded it, he would have striven as hard to regain his position, had he been overthrown at the outset. But the times had changed since the days of Santa Anna; the people had grown weary of fighting; they cared little who ruled them, so long as he appeared to rule wisely. Hence it was that Diaz was not sent into exile within a short period, and continued in power till the end of the term for which he had elected himself. Not that there were not the usual number of disturbances in distant districts; not that there were not rebellions and pronunciamientos by disaffected partisans who were neglected in the distribution of offices! On the contrary, many of these occurred, but they were soon quelled, owing to the loyalty of the army, which Diaz had completely won. The first of

these who adopted Diaz' own tactics against himself was one Lomeli, in Jalisco. Then there was a serious movement on the frontier, headed by no less a personage than General Escobedo, who looked to a restoration of the banished president, Lerdo. This grand old warrior, a second Guerrero, was made prisoner, and incarcerated finally in the prison of Santiago. This seems to have been the fate of nearly every Mexican commander who fought upon principle, and refused to change his colors with every successful usurper of supreme power.



MARKET SCENE, CITY OF MEXICO.

In March, 1869, there was a serious outbreak in the military district of Tepic, which the government put forth great exertions to subdue, and in June, of the same year, the war steamer "Liberty" *pronounced* against the administration of Tuxtepec. This event caused for awhile terror and confusion on the coast, as it was something new in the annals of pronunciamientos,

which until this time had been entirely on land. A ministerial crisis was brought about soon, by which there was placed in power, as Secretary of War, General Manuel Gonzalez. This able lieutenant of Diaz had resided in retirement on his hacienda since the battle of Tecoac, at which action he was wounded. His services had not been forgotten by the president, who now rewarded him, paving the way (as we shall shortly see) for his elevation to the highest office in the power of the nation to bestow.

[A. D. 1879.] The rebellion of Tepic, being at that time unsubdued, General Gonzalez, in December, 1879, was placed in command of a numerous and well-appointed army, and succeeded in bringing the inhabitants of that territory to terms. He also prepared the way for the peaceful progress of the election for president, which had now begun to agitate the country. It happened now (as had ever been the case) that a period of calm preceded this important event, the people refraining from arms, and holding themselves in readiness to respond to their various leaders when the result of the election should be proclaimed.

As has been remarked in an early stage of Mexican independence, *military prestige* is essential to success in Mexican politics. This is no less true at present than in the early years of the republic, and those who were manipulating the preliminaries for General Gonzalez well understood this fact. His pacification of the territory of Tepic and his good standing with the army won for him half the battle. Although the papers of the country were exceedingly bitter in their controversies, yet there were no scenes of bloodshed enacted. The president and the army were with Gonzalez, and who, then, could oppose him?

[A. D. 1880.] On the 30th of November, General Diaz yielded the power he had wielded since the battle of

Tecoac to his successor, the hero of that battle, and General Gonzalez became ruler of Mexico. Much astonishment has been expressed that Diaz did not secure — what he undoubtedly could have done — a re-election. But this he could not have done consistently with the principles he professed to believe in, for he had combated Lerdo upon the basis of no re-election. He resigned the reins of government into the hands of his friend, Gonzalez, with good grace, more especially as he still continued *de facto* President of Mexico.

To those who believe General Diaz capable of committing the great sacrifice of voluntarily giving up what it cost him so much to obtain, and that pure patriotism dictated his act of abdication, it will only be necessary to point out a certain amendment to the constitution :—

"The president will enter upon his duties on the 1st of December, and will remain in office four years. He will not be eligible for re-election for the period immediately succeeding, neither shall he occupy the presidency, for any reason, *until four years have passed* without his exercising executive functions."

This is a liberal translation of "Article 78," as amended in 1877. It would, perhaps, be well to remember this amendment, made to bolster General Diaz in his position. If General Diaz does not assert a claim to the presidency in the coming election of 1884, then we may award him his full meed of praise. At present we can only hold our judgment in reserve, for he has done nothing that especially redounds to his credit, unless disinterested. We see, in his act, merely the transfer of authority from one revolutionary chief to another, who holds his high office as a trust, until his superior officer can again become eligible under the law. Upon his retirement from the presidency Diaz was provided with a place in the cabinet, as "Minister

of Fomento," or public works, and the next year was installed as governor of the State of Oaxaca, by orders of the central government.

A noteworthy event in the commercial history of Mexico was the arrival in the capital of a party of nearly one hundred and forty merchants and commercial men of Chicago, in January, 1879. Their coming was hailed by the Mexicans as an omen of increasing prosperity, and the western capitalists were everywhere treated with that courtesy and attention their exalted position merited.

A year later, in February, 1880, General Grant, ex-president of the United States, concluded his extended tour around the world by visiting Mexico. He was received, like the business men from Chicago, with the *vivas* of an enthusiastic people. Processions were formed in his honor, and he was lodged and fed at the cost of the municipality. His visit was without political significance, although certain seditious leaders of opinion in Mexico disseminated the foolish report that he desired to eventually establish himself as dictator in that country. That his motives were friendly towards Mexico was conclusively proven in the following year, when he returned to that country empowered by some New York capitalists to secure a concession for a railroad, which, if built, will greatly benefit the southern portion of Mexico.

Within the past five years vast and important changes have taken place in Mexico. Through the impulse of American capital and energy, she is taking immense strides onward towards a glorious future of prosperity. Her mines are being developed — those inexhaustible veins of silver and gold, that have been worked ever since the period of the conquest without yet showing signs of depletion.

Greater progress has been made in the direction of railway construction than was ever known before.

We have noticed the commencement of the first important railroad, and the granting of "concessions," or permissions, to build.

Since the dates of the latter events nothing has occurred to interrupt their continued advance. Capital has flowed into the country from every portion of the United States, chiefly from the North. Two great international lines have not only availed themselves of the liberal subsidies granted by the Mexican government, but have worked with such energy that more than a thousand miles, all told, are in actual operation. Four other railway enterprises also seek ingress into Mexico, and her territory will soon be covered with a network of steel that shall rival in length the web of wire woven across her by the lines of the telegraph and telephone. All these great lines either diverge from, or seek a terminal station in, the city of Mexico, that ancient capital of the Aztecs, now, as then, the centre of Mexican civilization and progress.

Under the fostering care of government the revenues have been steadily augmented, until the last fiscal year of 1881–2 showed a grand total of $27,500,000, an increase over the year previous of $4,500,000.

Material progress has not outstripped intellectual advancement, as schools, colleges, and libraries have sprung up all over the land. At the secularization of the church property the vast conventual buildings became the property of the State, and the great libraries, containing many and rare volumes, were thrown open to the public. These have formed nuclei, about which have been gathered new and modern books, and from which the popular mind is being supplied with intellectual food. The newspapers published in Mexico, according to a recent statement in a leading paper, number two hundred and eighty-three, of which ninety-four appear in the capital. They print, in

the aggregate, 378,000 copies, with a total annual circulation of 47,000,000 copies. The libraries of Puebla and the city of Mexico are becoming models of their class. Of paintings, by many famous artists, Mexico has her full share, as the viceroys and the wealthy men of the past century adorned convents and churches with many gems of art. The Academy of San Carlos, in Mexico, contains masterly productions, not only of Mexico's talented sons, but of painters long since famous in the world of art, and sculptures that have received the encomiums even of such men as the great Humboldt.

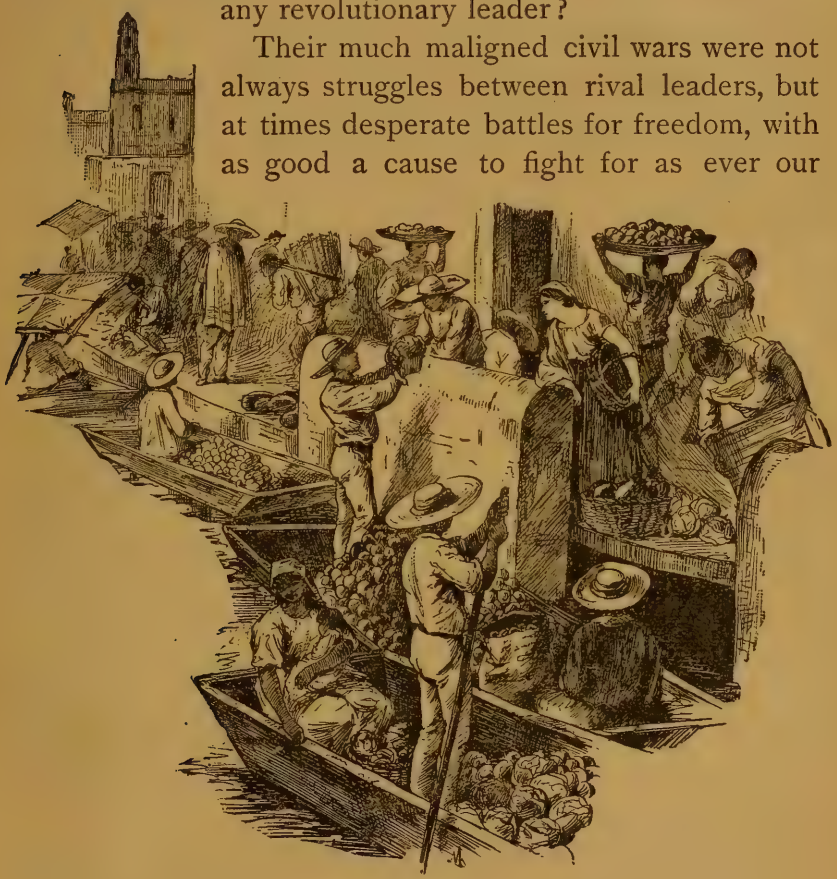
The scientific world is indebted to Mexico for such illustrious names as Cubas, Orozco y Berra, Mendoza, Blazquez, and Bárcena, shining lights among a host of lesser luminaries. These indefatigable workers, in the National Museum and in the Meteorological Observatory of the Capital, are marching with the van-guard of scientific observers. Only those writers ignorant of their labors, and unacquainted with the language in which they publish them, have the temerity to assert that Mexico has produced no men of mark in the realm of thought and original investigation. Their works are a standing refutation to such slanderous statements, and when they shall be collected, and translated into the leading languages of the world, they will form a monument to genius that any nation might well be proud of.

Mexico assuredly contains within herself every element of prosperity; she has the richest mines in the world, the most varied resources of agricultural wealth, and the greatest variety of soil, surface, and climate. It only remains with her people, who now number ten millions, to properly conserve and develop this vast wealth, for her to take a leading position among the nations of the world.

She has now enjoyed an almost uninterrupted peace of

nearly five years. Will that peace continue, and will her people accept the lessons the experience of sixty years of revolutions should have taught them? Is there any assurance that peace will continue for, even, five years more, and that they will not rush to arms at the first trumpet blast of any revolutionary leader?

Their much maligned civil wars were not always struggles between rival leaders, but at times desperate battles for freedom, with as good a cause to fight for as ever our



CANAL OF LA VIGA, CITY OF MEXICO.

fathers had in 1776. But, through a long continuance of this evil, civil war, the Mexican people do not entertain that horror of bloodshed that prevails in a country blessed with years of peace. It has given birth to hosts of men with mili-

tary aspirations, to men who thirst for power and military fame, and who are ready to seize upon any pretext for obtaining it. We have seen this on the occasion of the last successful revolution; and though General Diaz, once firmly seated, used his power temperately and wisely, and promoted the arts of peace and progress, no security can be given that the next *pronunciador* against lawful authority will conduct himself with such moderation General Diaz was a sagacious man, who saw the necessity for arraying his forces on the side of progress, and who recognized the fact that his country could not much longer endure the odium of the world for her deeds of violence. Was it policy or patriotism that guided him?

If, in the coming election of 1884, he shall rise to the position of a disinterested spectator, and abstain from any fresh act of violence, he will receive, and merit, the highest praise. If, on the contrary, he demands back from his henchman, Gonzalez, the presidential chair, as a right acquired by conquest, — though under pretext of a vote from the people — will not his country be precipitated anew into a state of anarchy and confusion? Is it not as true now as it was in years past, that: "In Mexico, more than anywhere else, political parties are actuated by interest, not by conviction"?

Suffrage is only nominally universal. The poor Indian has the *right* to vote, but rarely exercises it; and then never inquires how the election returns are manipulated in the interests of those who are in office, and who desire to stay in.

A strong central government, arbitrary, almost despotic, in its character, rules Mexico. It is not the will of the people that is expressed, but the will of a few. The railroads, telegraphs, improved methods of communication, are

they actual evidences of the regeneration of Mexico, and of her sincere desire for internal improvement and external communication; or, rather, the outgrowth of that central system of government, which encourages all means of connection with remote provinces, in order that it may the more easily quell any incipient revolution? It sits intrenched in its capital in the valley of Mexico, and, Briareus-like, stretches out its iron claws to grasp the disaffected throughout its territory.

Mexico has passed through terrible ordeals, and has become in a measure purified; yet she is still on probation before the world. Not her most enthusiastic friend dare assert that she is in the enjoyment of an assured peace, while the elements of disturbance: unscrupulous leaders, and ignorant people in the majority, still exist; and a crushed, though still powerful, priesthood, is nursing its wrath and gaining to itself strength for a renewal of the contest between Church and State.

Upon the wisdom and forbearance of her rulers for the coming decade depends Mexico's salvation. If a crisis does not occur in the approaching presidential election, the friends of Mexico may well take courage and indulge in the hope of a permanent peace.

Mexico, to-day, is a confederated republic of twenty-seven states, one territory, and one federal district, with a form of government modelled after that of the United States. The press is free, and religious liberty is complete, in theory, and no one is molested for his political opinions. Commerce and labor flow on unmolested in regular channels, and the internal and external obligations of the country are being paid with regularity. Her position to-day, except for the uncertain state of her politics, is one to be envied. Every indication points towards an

era of prosperity hitherto without a parallel in her history. The whole world looks upon her advancement with attention, and the people of the United States, especially, are sincerely united in the desire that she has entered upon a long and uninterrupted

PERIOD OF PEACE.



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JAN 14 1947